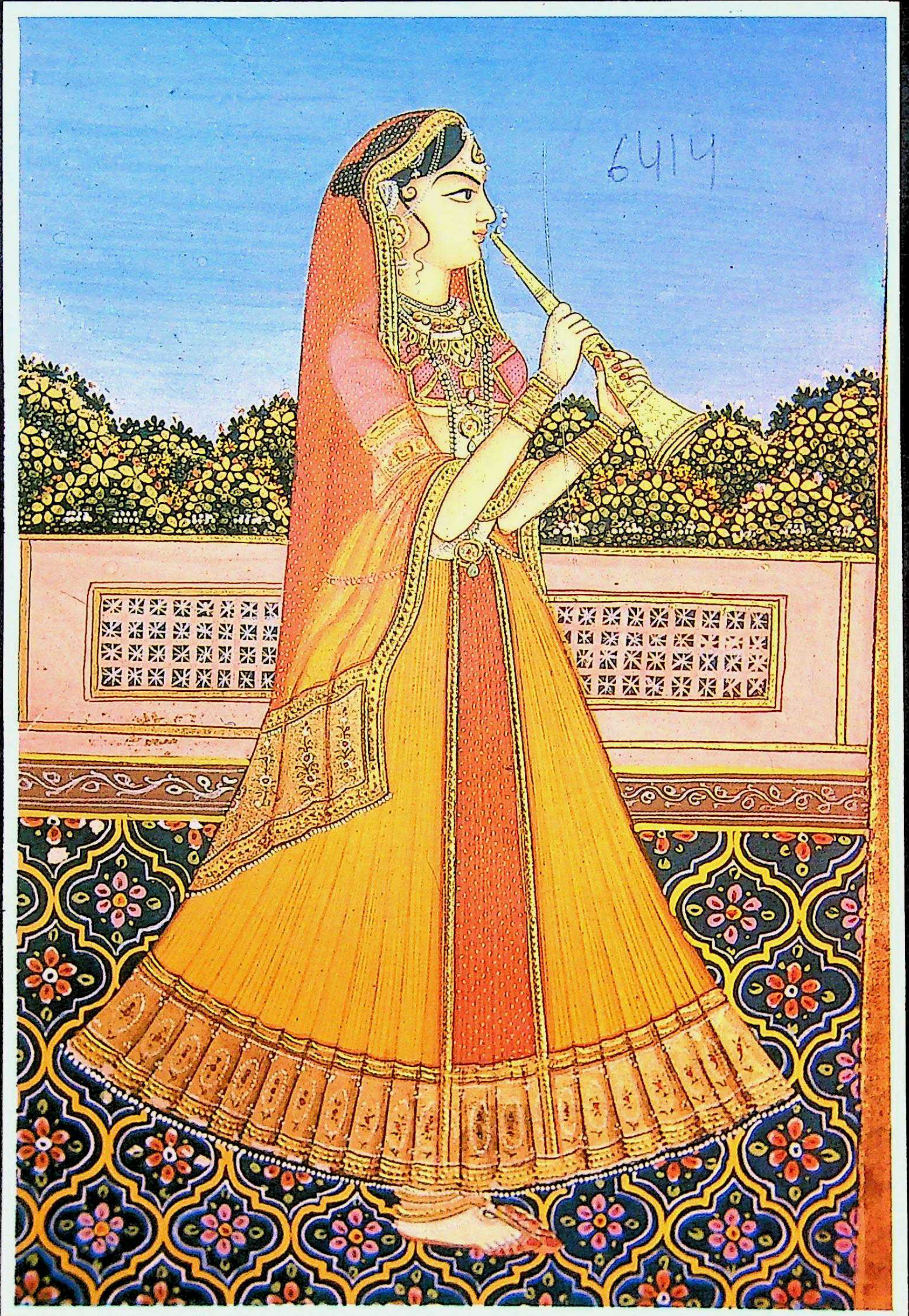
SPLENDOUR OF RAJASTHANI PAINTING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JAI SINGH NEERAJ

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To my Guru late Shri Ram Lal Sawal,
Retired Principal, Raj Rishi College,
Alwar, Rajasthan
&
Beloved daughter
Dr. Sangeeta Singh
who left me untimely.

– JAI SINGH NEERAJ

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PREFACE

Rajasthan has played a significant role in the growth of Indian art. Like other fine arts, painting flourished widely in this region and established a distinct form called Rajasthani painting. Because of its charming, folk-artistic and feudalistic perspectives, many styles of painting developed here, and among them the Mewar, Bundi and Kishangarh schools acquired worldwide acclaim.

It is a matter of regret that though many small and large publications on various styles and substyles have been brought out in India and foreign countries from time to time, but a comprehensive study of Rajasthani painting has not yet been published in the form of a book. This publication is an humble effort to bring out a concise study of the subject. I hope it will prove a great asset to scholars and connoisseurs of art and open new vistas for undertaking a more detailed study.

Rajasthani painting is an integral part of ancient Indian painting. From the point of view of artistic and geographical development, I have classified it in four sections — the Mewar school, the Marwar school, the Hadoti school and the Dhundar school. Among these four schools numerous styles and substyles have flourished. They require a great deal of research work.

I hope this publication will be an important link in the study of the cultural renaissance of Rajasthan and will help understand the comprehensive form and constitution of Rajasthani painting.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to all eminent scholars and friends with whose cooperation the present work was accomplished. I also owe an immense debt to Kumar Sangram Singh of the Jaipur City Museum and the Government Museum of Udaipur and Alwar, and the National Museum, New Delhi, for the use of colour transparencies. I cannot adequately thank my worthy friends and well-wishers like Padmashri Ramgopal Vijaivargiya, Kumar Sangram Singh, Dr. Prem Chand Goswami, Sarvashri Vijai Kumar, Bhagirath Bhargava and Vijai Verma for the valuable suggestions and advice I received from them from time to time in our fruitful discussions. Shri Shakti Malik, Proprietor, Abhinav Publications, deserves my most profound thanks for his excellent production of this book.

Jai Singh Neeraj

Jawahar Nagar
Jaipur (India)

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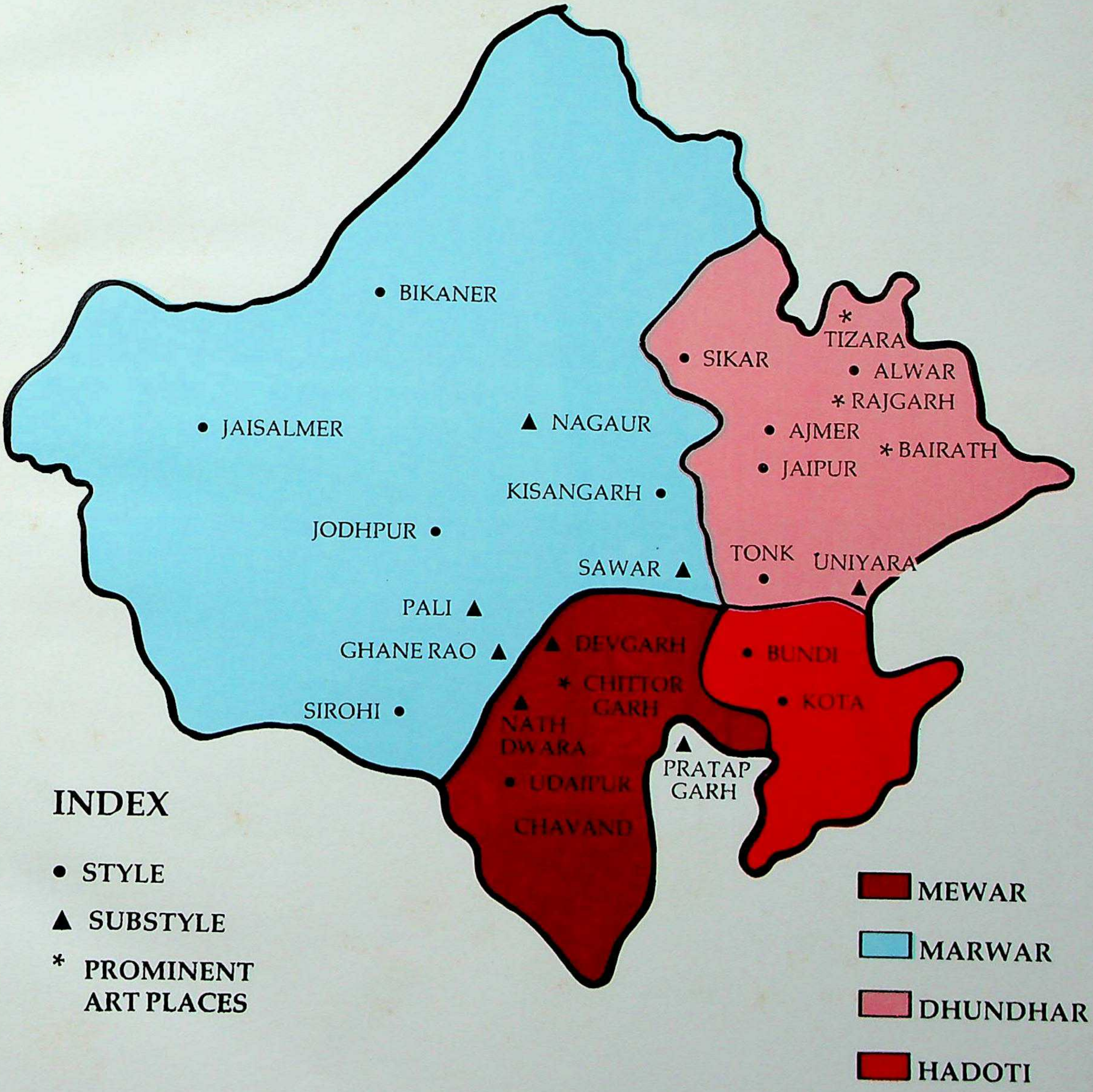
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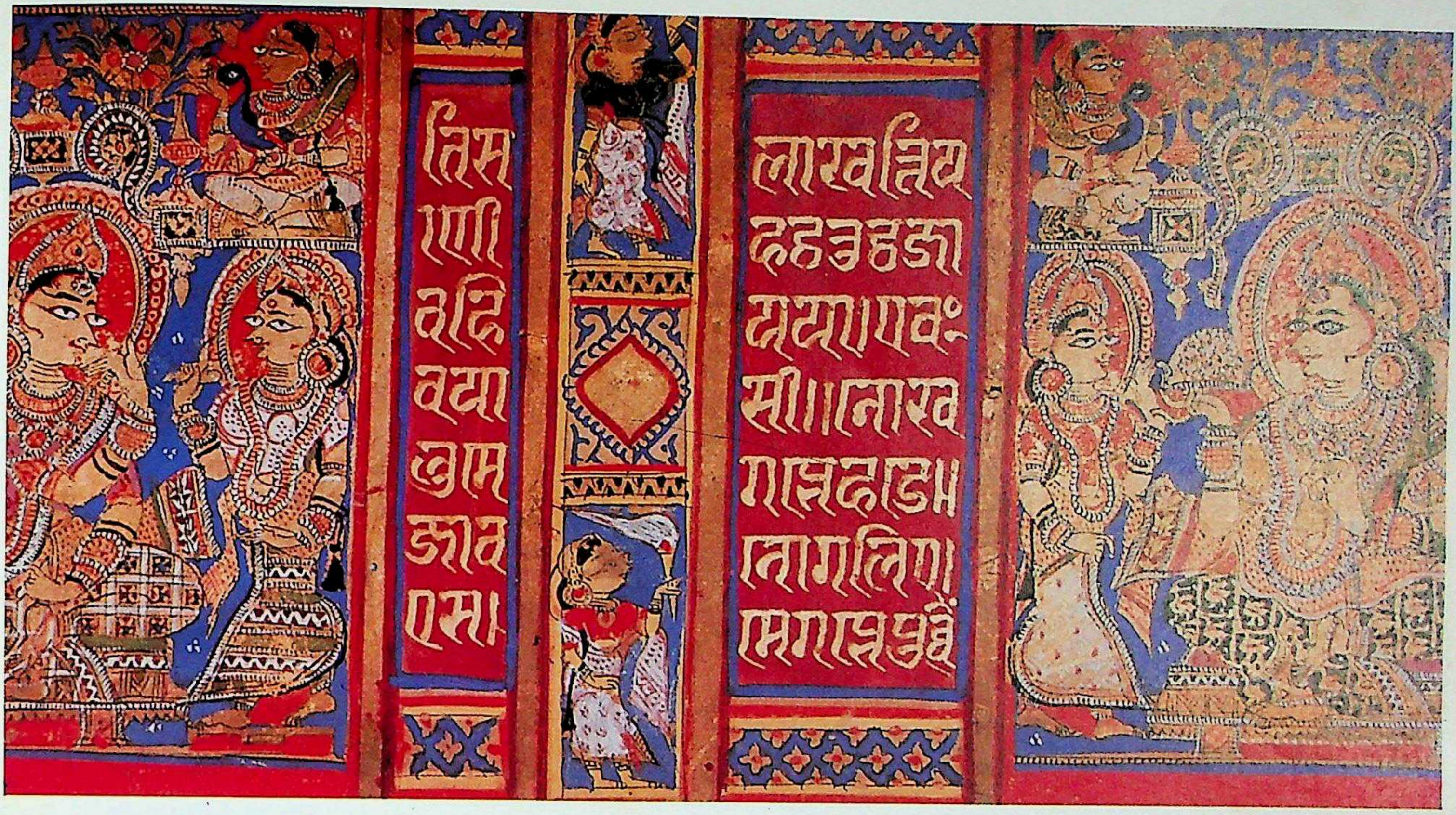

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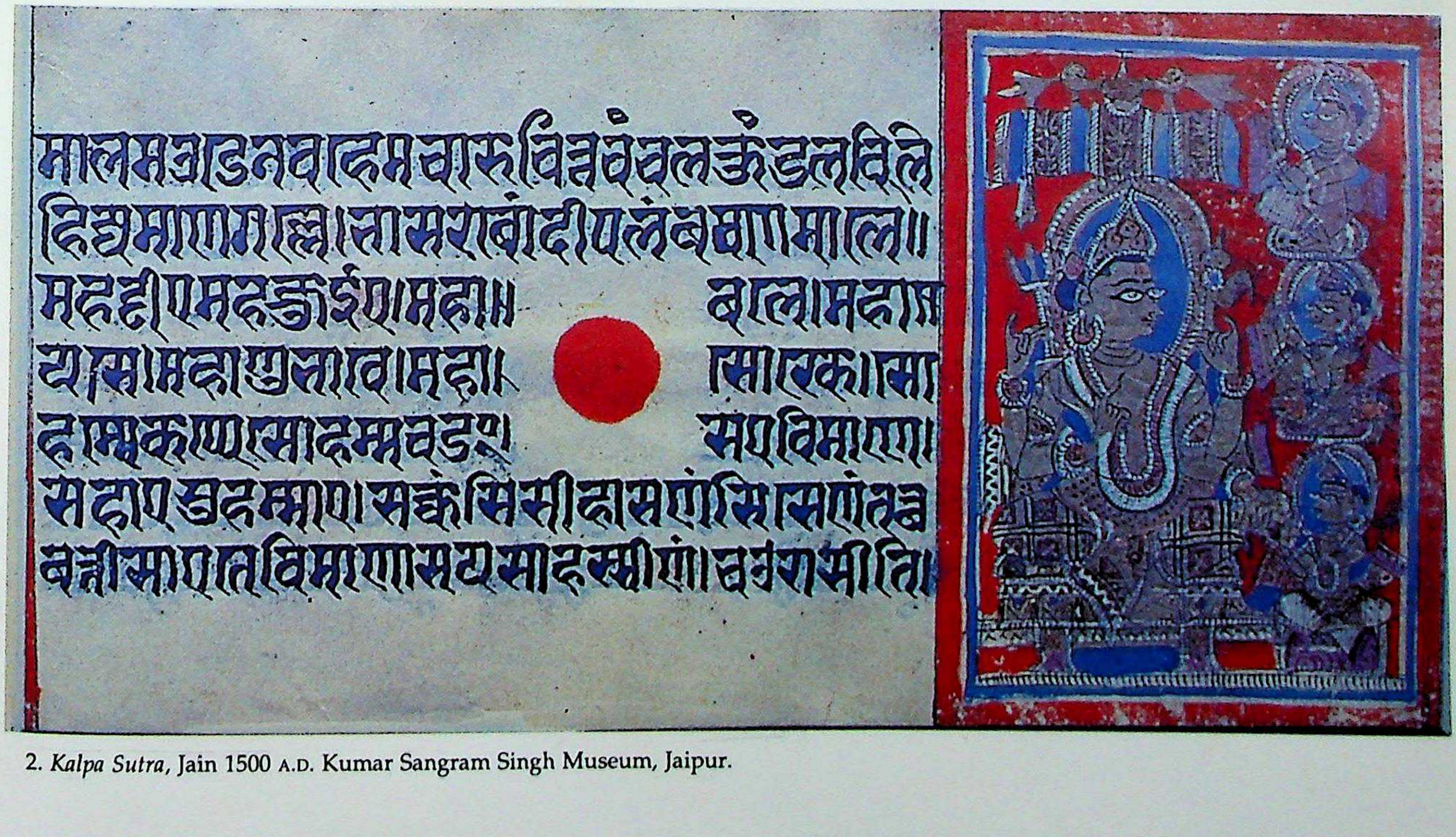

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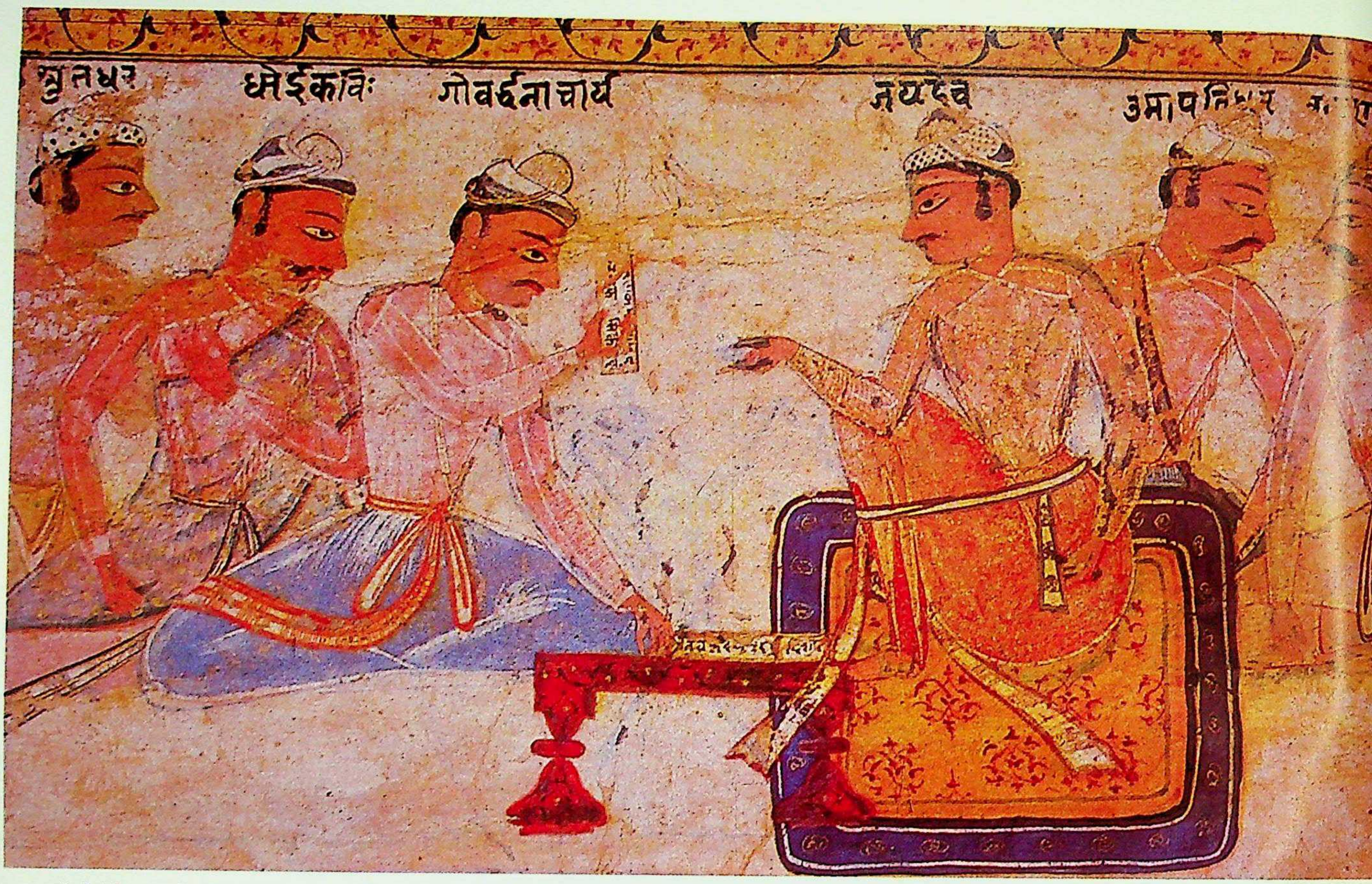
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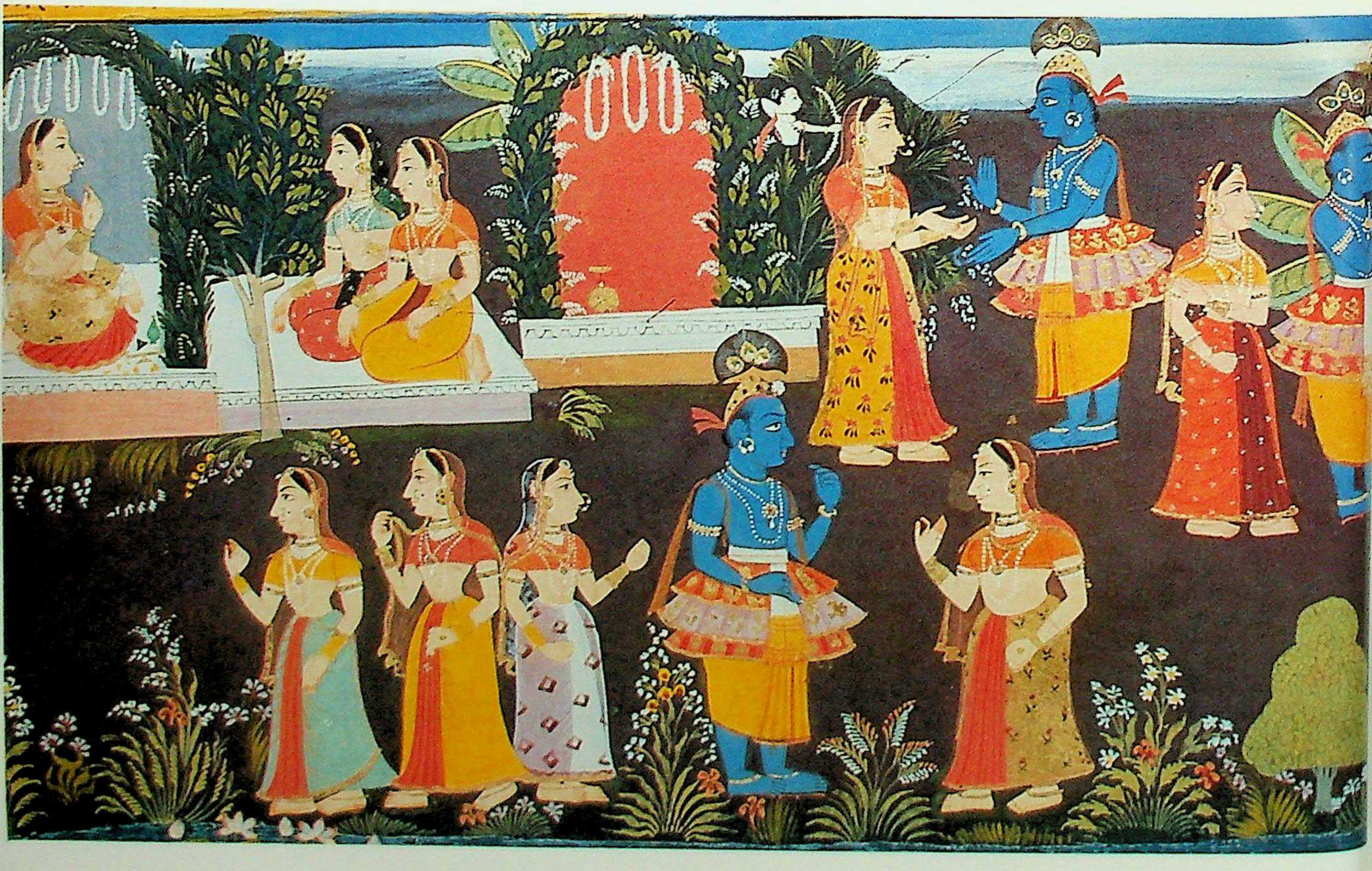

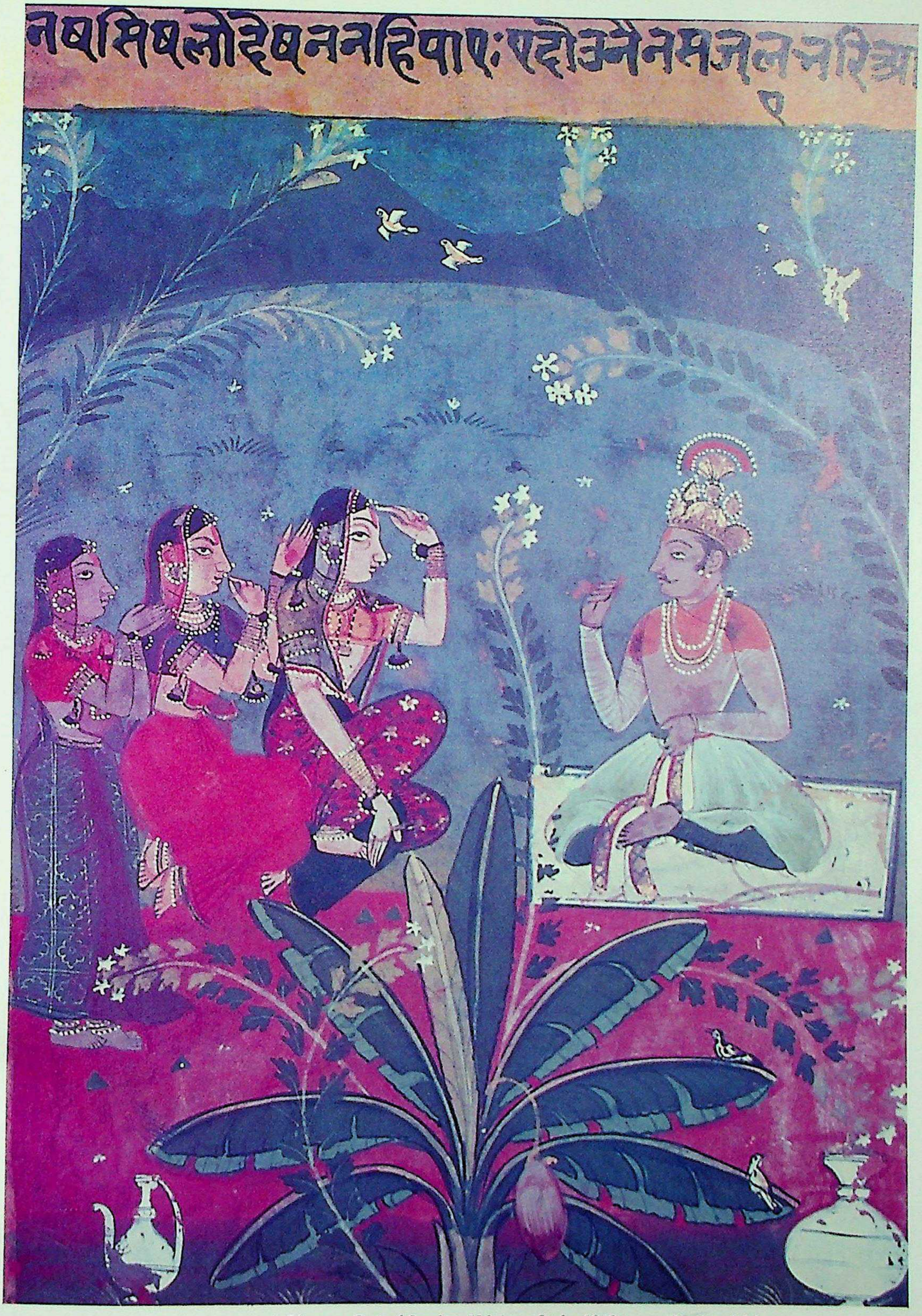

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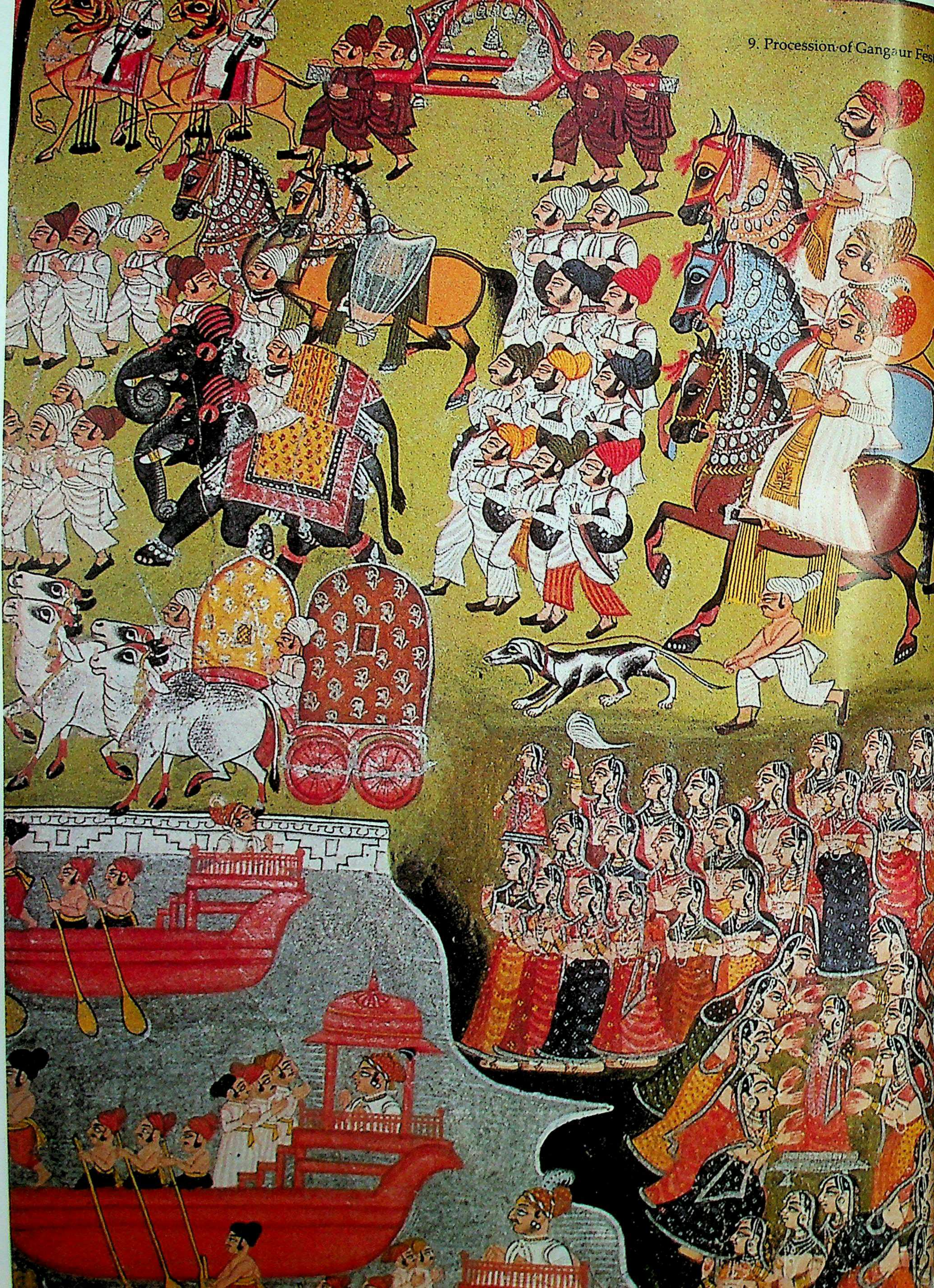

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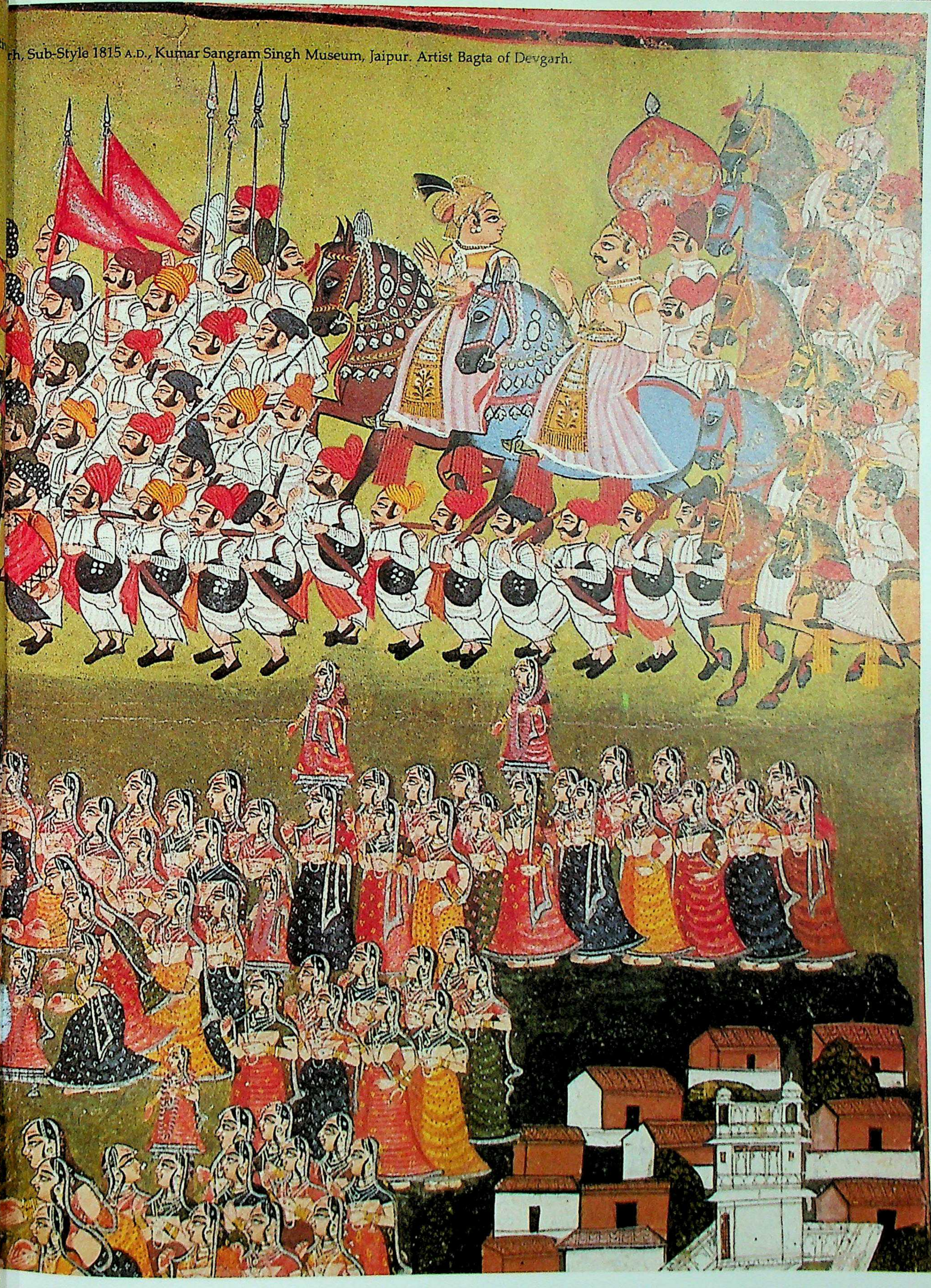

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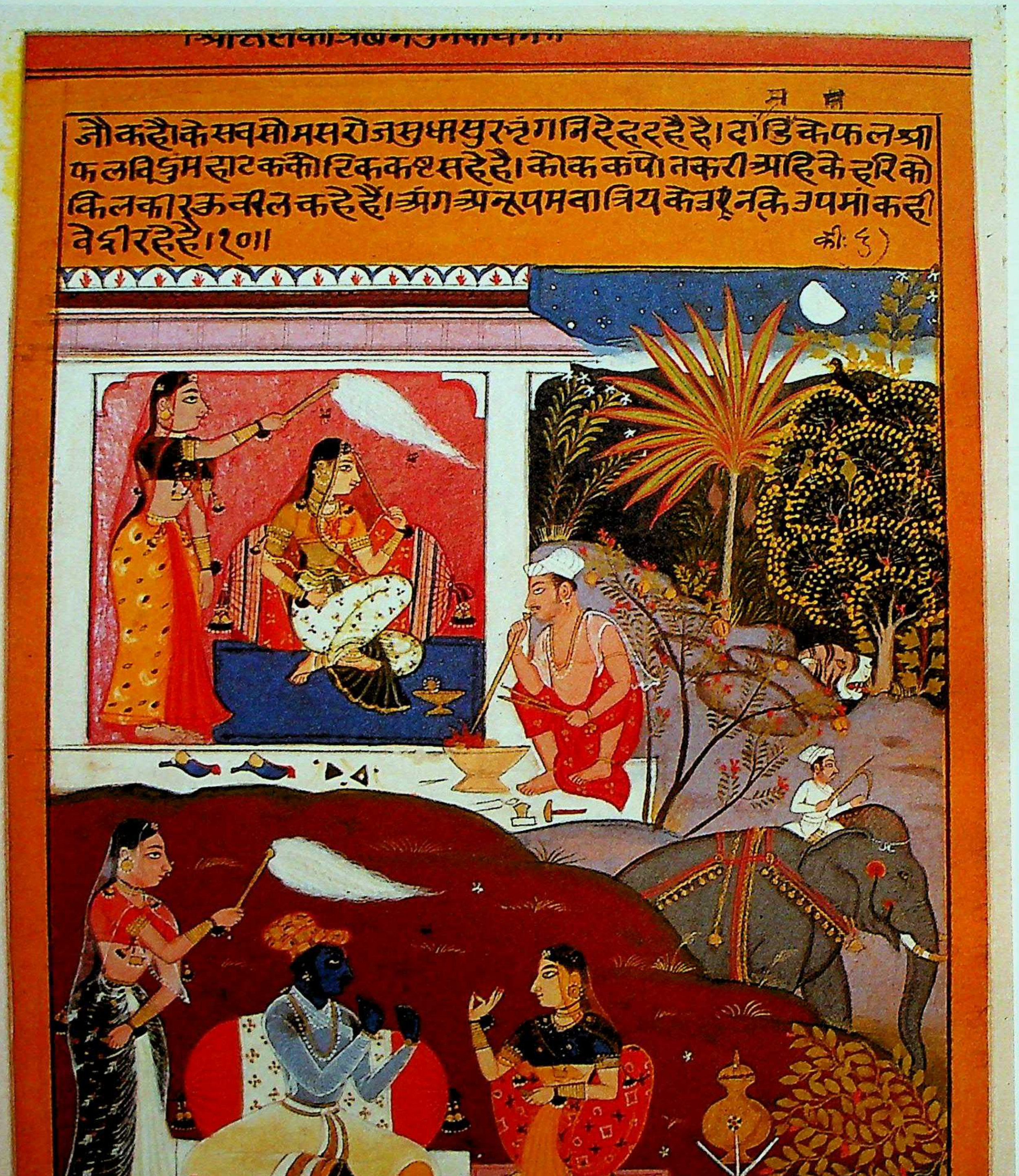
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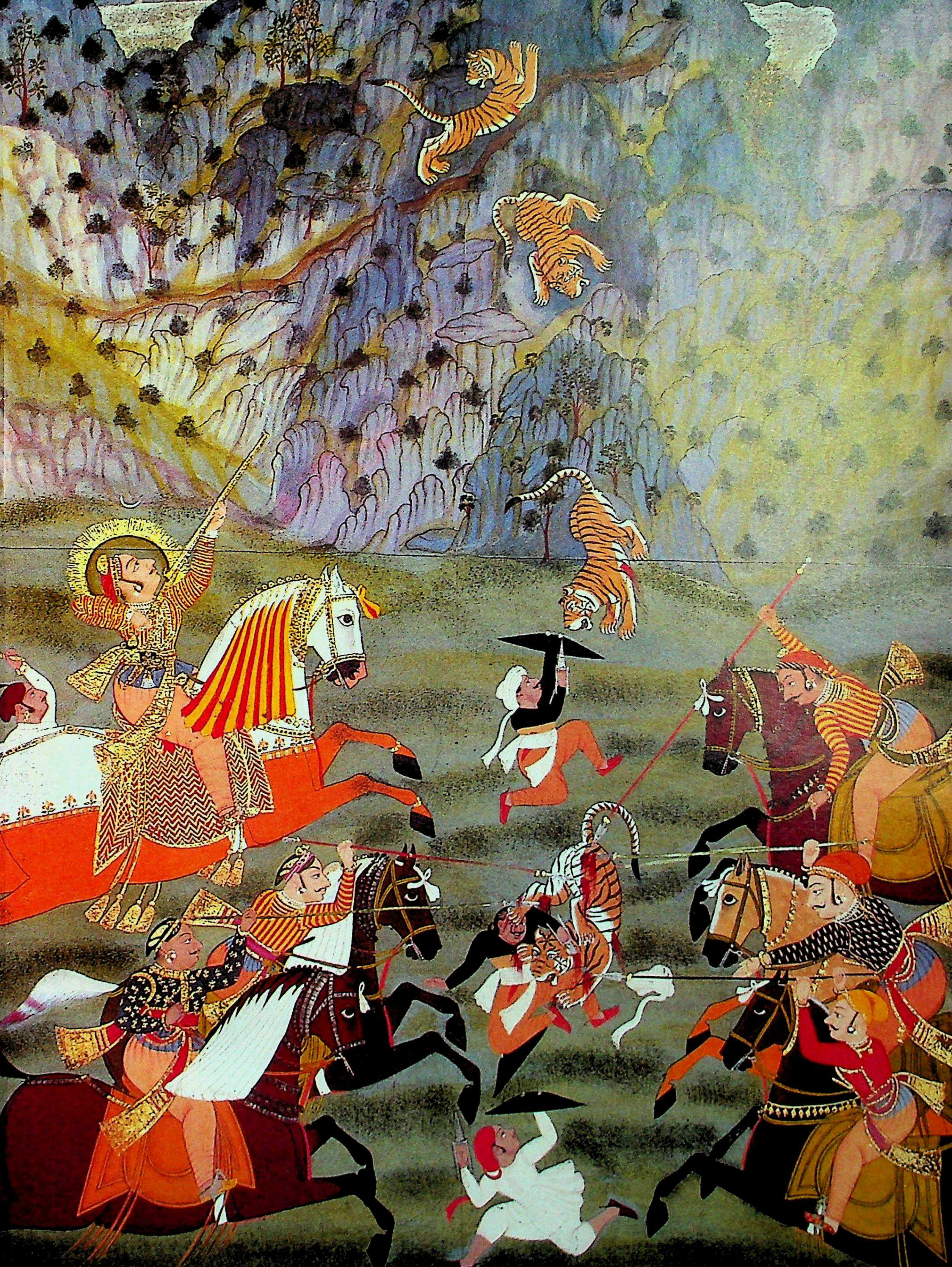

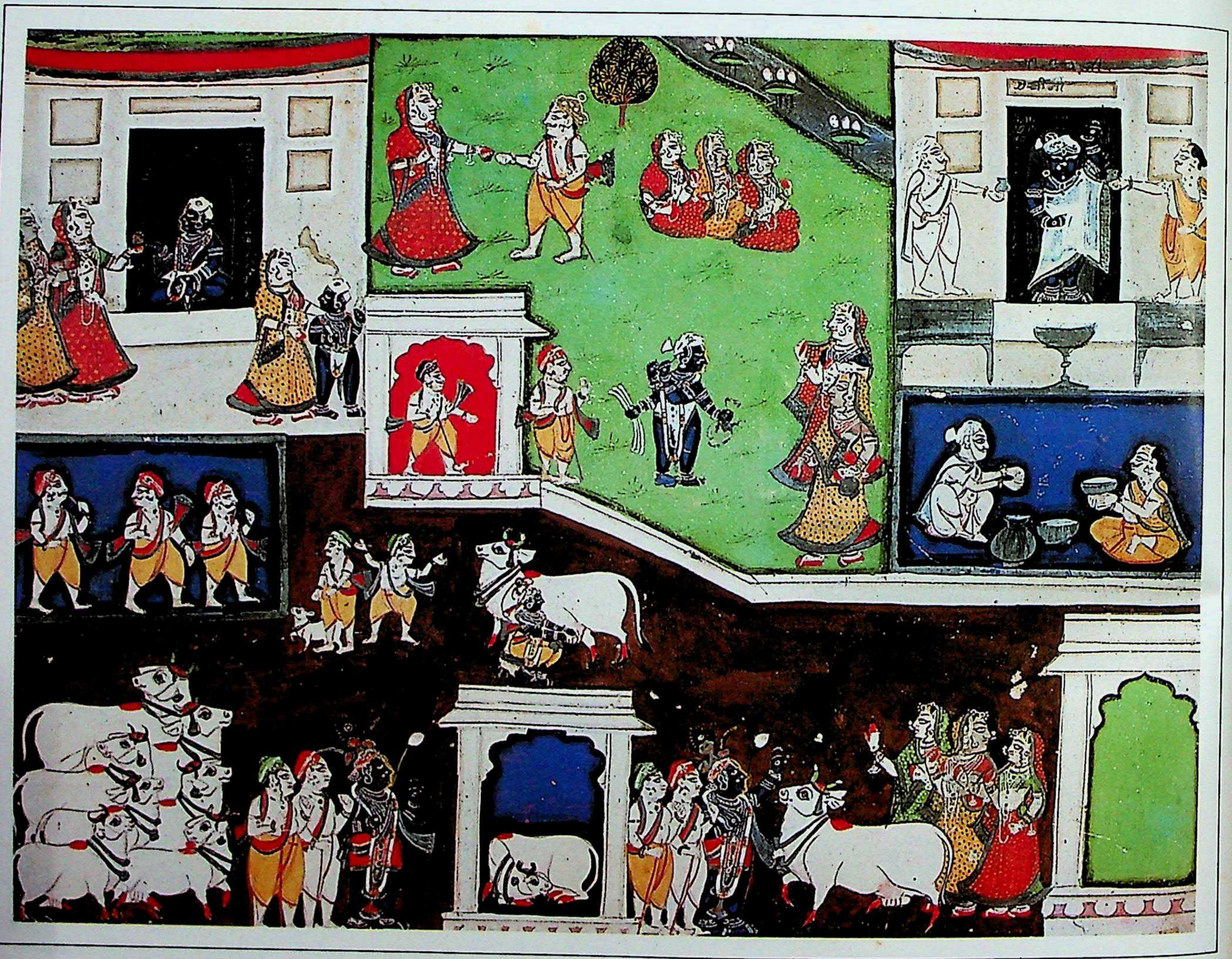

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INTRODUCTION

Art is a unique example of expressing a cultured way of life. The experience of joy relating to the visible or invisible physical or astral body or sentiments being in real form, appear before human beings in expressive forms. That expression is termed art.

The word *kala* is derived from Sanskrit. It has been used in Sanskrit literature in numerous interpretations, in which the 16th part of a principal object, "a part of time", the expected intelligence in performing any task deserves special mention. Before the advent of Bharat Muni, *kala* had been applied in almost all other acts of intelligence except poetry, and was a special world for such work of the intellect. Any useful business regarding life had ever been placed in the category of art.

The best example of the application of the word is clearly discernible in the *Natyashastra* by Bharat: "Na tajjanam na tachhilypam na vidyaa na saa kala." The word *kala* frequently used by Bharat comes very near to fine art and architecture (*shilpa*) is near to a useful art. In India all such knowledge and vocations requiring the slightest intelligence are termed art, *kala*.

The Western view of art seems similar. Art is related to old French art or Latin ars, whose meaning is to produce, to express or to adjust. Since the 13th century in England the word art has been used with the meaning intelligence. Since the 17th century the word has been associated with poetry, music, painting, iconography, architecture and the fine arts.

According to place, time and circumstances, the word art has been used in numerous contexts, but still it has never been deprived of expressing the meaning of intelligent acts and thoughtful depiction.

From time to time intellectuals and connoisseurs have defined art in a manner which clearly echoes the meaning of fine art. To attain the exalted status of Shiv and express the beautiful form of truth, art is a powerful medium which according to the tastes and instincts of the artist has been conveyed from time to time for that eternal depiction. Hence through poetry, music, painting, iconography and through construction of splendid buildings, the artist from time to time made his special contribution to society. Among the above five arts painting occupies a unique status.

"Chiyate iti chitram", or the artist sorts out introvert and extrovert sentiments. Paintings containing sweetness, dynamism and liveliness could be termed beautiful painting. Owing to such beauty painting is accorded an exalted position. In ancient India Vishnudharmottara Puran makes the following reference: "Kalanaam pravarm chitram dharma kaamartha mokshdam, Mangalyam prathamam chetadgrihai yatra pratishatham."[1] The art of painting is considered a subtle means to pursue religion, pleasure and liberation. With this desire for happiness a painting is installed in the home. Such sentiments have motivated the decoration of houses with drawings. Frescoes from the Ajanta caves to the *havelis* of Shekhawati are a testimony to this view.

Lines and colours are the medium of painting. On any infrasurface the artist could express his feelings through the application of lines and colours. "On any surface, smooth or rough, drawing an attractive object with lines of watery, oily or wet or dry colours is termed painting. Such a depicted object is called a picture. Such infrasurface chiefly belongs to fresco, stone, wood, utensils and *phalaks* of baked clay, ivory, leather, cloth, palm leaves and paper."[2] The artist possesses a distinct characteristic to depict heights, distance and nearness on a plane surface in which he turns his imaginative ideas into visible paintings through the arrangement of colours and lines according to his capability. Hence it is said: "Poetry is a speaking picture and a picture is mute poetry."[3]

Basis of Painting

To create paintings artists have selected different media in accordance with circumstances of time and space and among them are frequently available paintings in the form of frescoes and scripts.

Frescoes

The art of frescoes belongs to the instinct of primitive human beings. Ancient cave paintings testify to this view. The frescoes in the caves of Ajanta, Ellora, Allania[4] (Rajasthan) have attracted worldwide attention of art connoisseurs. Frescoes have been drawn in temples, palaces and cenotaphs. After the 16th century palaces, temples, cenotaphs and *havelis* frequently appeared in temples dedicated to the Vallabha sect, houses and cenotaphs of feudal lords and palatial buildings (*havelis*) belonging to the capitalists of Shekhawati. Frescoes have ever been an ancient tradition in our country, and accordingly paintings have been produced with new techniques.

Script Painting

In India the tradition of script painting is very old. Like fresco painting it is still prevalent. From the commercial angle, drawing of *padd* and *picchavai* is done even today in Rajasthan. In regard to script paintings, a Tantric text of Buddhism titled *Aray Manjushri Kalp* says drawing is to be done on clean white cloth which has borders on both sides. Silk cloth is prohibited for this purpose.

Script paintings are available in two forms as *padd* or *picchavai* scrolls. *Padds* are based on stories of folk gods while *picchavais* relate to Krishna-Lila. *Kundalitpat* or scrolls have been made with less width and more length. The whole text has been painted in this scroll. A scroll of Bhagvad Puran decorated with 107 paintings of the Alwar school preserved in the museum at Alwar is the longest scroll in my knowledge.[5]

Manuscript Paintings

In ancient days the tradition of writing poetry and making drawings on *bhurj* leaves or palm leaves was kept alive. This resulted in the abundance of pictorial texts preserved in many Jain homes and museums, and in this Rajasthan's contribution deserves special mention.[6]

The themes of the pictorial texts mostly relate to Jainism. Among them *Kalpa-Sutra* (Pl. 1), *Kalikacharya Kathanak* and *Neminath Charitra* deserve special mention. Texts compiled on palm leaves had a definite dimension and the reverse sides of different leaves had been written or painted on. Such leaves had been compiled as texts after making holes in the centre.

The invention of paper in the 12th century ushered in a new era in the compilation of pictorial texts.[7] *Uttarayan Sutra* of V.S. 1277 and *Nyaya, Tatparya-Tikka* compiled by Vachaspati Mishra in V.S. 1270 and painted on paper are preserved in the Granth-Bhandar of Jaisalmer. Credit for encouraging this tradition goes to the Sagun-Bhakti movement and the Mughal rulers of India.

The Sagun-Bhakti movement provided fresh inspiration for folklife. *Lilas* of Ram and Krishna turned into reality through the media of poetry and painting. The tradition of painting texts, making poetry the basis, received a great impetus.

The coming of Mughal rule popularised the tradition of text painting greatly. Two artists, Sayid Ali and Abdul Samad, from Persia accompanied Humayun to India and painted the text *Ameer Hamza*. In the royal court of Akbar, a keen lover of painting, great artists like Bassavan, Dasvant, Sanval Dass, Farukh Beg enjoyed imperial patronage. Besides Babar-Nama, Akbar-Nama, Rajjam-Nama and Tuti-Nama had also painted religious texts like Mahabharat, Ramayan and Anwar-a-Suhali (Panchatantra).[8]

After the advent of Akbar the tradition of manuscript painting gathered momentum. The Mughal school, the Rajasthani school and the Pahari school were important links in the art of painting texts based upon Ram Kavya, Krishna Kavya, Sufi Kavya, Riti Kavya, Barah-Masa, Ritu-Varnan, Rag-Ragini, which are still available.

Miniatures

Miniature art is an offshoot of manuscript painting. On the basis of imagination or poetical sentiments, providing a heading or without a title, such miniatures are available in large numbers in numerous museums and private collections. *Laghuchitra* or miniature painting is the heritage of Rajasthani painting.

References

1. Vishnudharmottara Puran—Chitrasutram, 43/38.
2. Raikrishan Dass, *Bharat ki Chitra Kala*, p. 10.
3. Lessing, Laocoon 16.
4. Prehistoric paintings in caves on the banks of the Chambal near Kota have been discovered. To the best of our knowledge these are the oldest specimens of painting in Rajasthan.
5. Alwar Museum, No. 257-3-5. No. 4759 KHA.
6. From the point of view of the oldest paintings the Jain collections of Jaisalmer and Khambat deserve special mention.
7. Karl Khandalawala, *Rajasthan Paintings—An Introduction*, Rajasthan Lalit Kala Akademi, Vaarshiki, 63, p. 11.
8. Raikrishan Dass, *Akbar Kalin Chitrit Granth Aur Unkei Chitrakar*, Kalanidhi, No. 3, p. 27.

CHAPTER I

RAJASTHANI PAINTING

Because of its unique geographical, historical and cultural background, Rajasthan has earned much fame. On one hand, there are the high peaks of the Aravalli Hills, valleys with green vegetation and the beauty of nature, while on the other hand are large expanses of desert.

In the annals of Indian history, this territory had ever belonged to brave men and dedicated women. Different tribes, their way of living, style of dress, and cultural charm are unique and colourful. In one direction are the impregnable forts of Ranthambor, Chittor and Jaisalmer, while in another are the ancient and artistic temples of Dilwara, Ranakpur, Mandore, Paranagar and Badoli.

In a third direction tall palaces and other buildings, symbols of feudal glory, exist. In still another are huts built according to folk art style and belonging to Bhil tribes, Meenas and Girasias. Public figures decked out in colourful costumes are another highlight of this state. Architecture, iconography, music, literature and paintings of this region possess significant characteristics. Rajasthan is undoubtedly a glorious land of artists.

In the domain of world painting India occupies a unique and honourable place. Buddhist and Jain art in the styles of Pal, Gujarat, Apbhransh-Rajasthani, Mughal and Pahari have ever kept intact the traditions of Indian painting since the 2nd century A.D. till the present day. In this series of paintings. Rajasthani art, adopting the traditions of Ajanta, has developed its own unique cultural perspective and history.

Nomenclature

With regard to the nomenclature of Rajasthani painting, scholars hold varied opinion. Some call it Rajput painting and others Rajasthani painting. Ananda Coomaraswamy was the first scholar who scientifically classified Rajasthani painting in his book titled *Rajput Painting* in 1916.[1]

According to him, the theme of Rajput painting relates to Rajputana and the hill states of Punjab. He divided it into two parts, Rajasthani concerning Rajputana and Pahari relating to the hill states of Jammu, Kangra, Garhwal, Basohli, Chamba. The administrators of these states, often belonging to the Rajput clan, had termed these paintings Rajput.

According to Coomaraswamy, Rajasthani painting spread widely from Bikaner to the border of Gujarat and from Jodhpur to Gwalior and Ujjain. Amber, Aurachha, Udaipur, Bikaner and Ujjain had earned the reputation of being centres of artistic activities. But contrary to this view, Raikrishan Dass opines:

> Dr Swami had classified traditional Indian painting in two parts, the Rajput and Mughal styles, but there is no substance in identifying it as Rajput style. Even though the Rajputs were a ruling class, the cumulative effect of such a clan could not influence the style of art which had different centres in the whole country.[2]

Basil Grey comments: "Rajputana has been a centre of diverse princely indigenous states, but the expansion of Rajasthani painting had taken place from Bundelkhand to Gujarat and states ruled by Pahari Rajputs, that is why the name Rajput painting seems plausible."[3] Vachaspati Garrola had recognised only Rajasthani painting under the auspices of the Rajput style of painting, which seems to be more ambiguous.[4]

According to these arguments, all paintings of the Rajasthani school could be placed under the Rajput style. The region termed Rajputana under British rule has after independence been named Rajasthan with little variation. Before the advent of the British this whole state could have been known by a single name, but no substantial evidence could be produced to uphold this view. Only Col Tod named this region Rayathan or Rajasthan. But British officers often used to call it Rajputana. Hence we treat Rajasthani painting as that style which is an eternal heritage of this state. Many connoisseurs of art who had given this style various names like Raikrishan Dass, Ram Gopal Vijayavargia, Karl Khandalawala, Dr Moti Chandra, Kr. Sangram Singh and Ananda Coomaraswamy deserve special mention here.

Origin and Development

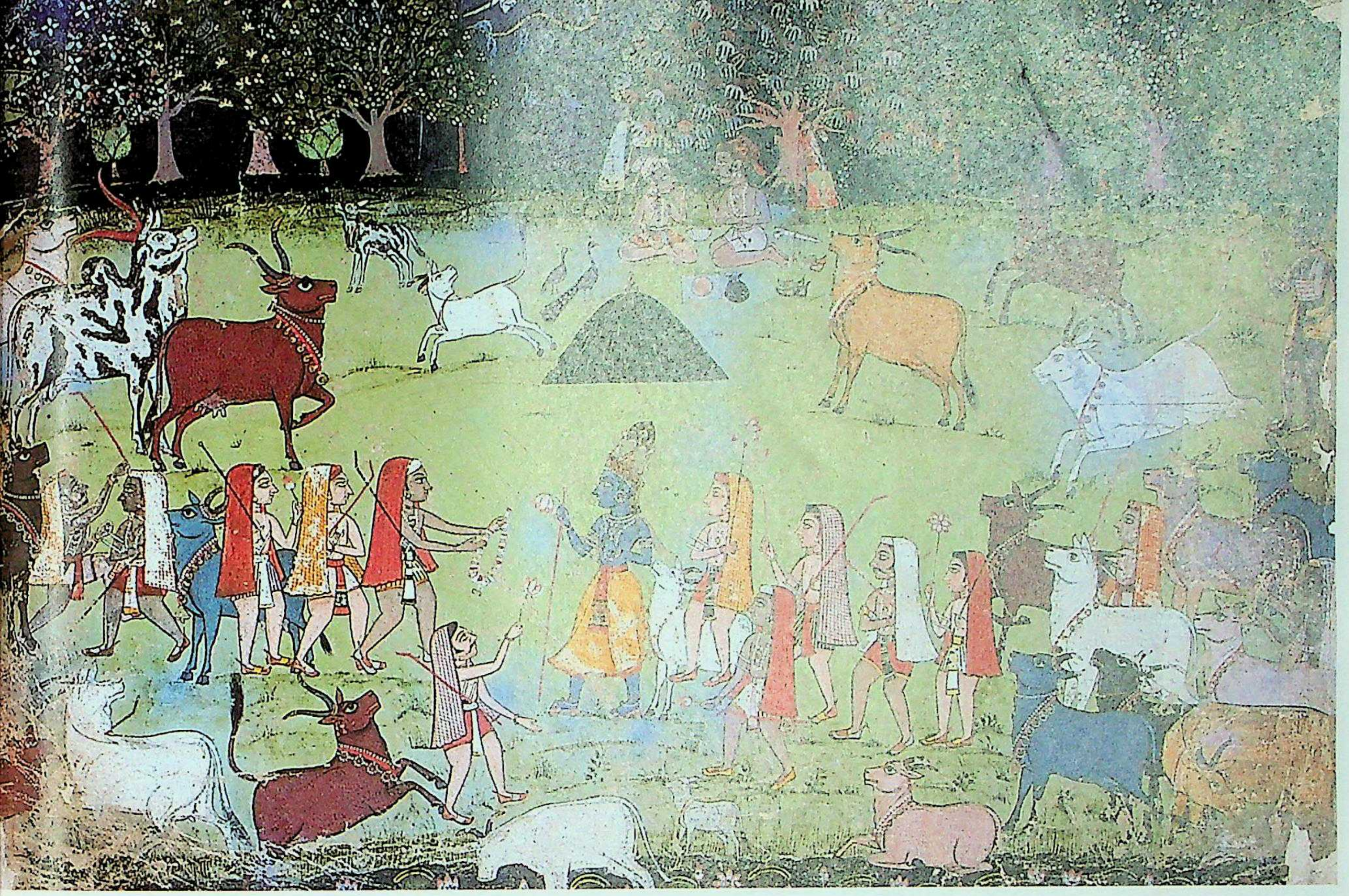
Details regarding the place of birth of Rajasthani painting, and the time and history of circumstances concerning its development, are not yet known. By having compiled books pertaining to many styles of Rajasthani painting different scholars have unfolded the history of the 17th century and its aftermath, but their earlier history is riven with contradictions. Art expert Herman Goetz observes: "Hardly a year or half passes but new findings about Rajasthani painting thoroughly alter our old conceptions. Particularly, the latest knowledge about Mewar paintings has raised many question marks."[5]

On the basis of earlier views Western scholars had recognised that the Rajasthani style flourished in various princely states after the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Some scholars however hold the view that it was merely an offshoot of Mughal painting and prospered in the reign of Jehangir. On the strength of new researches undertaken and opinions formed years ago these views have been dismissed.

Hence these views, also expressed by Dr Coomaraswamy, do not appear appropriate even though historically they are highly significant.[6] With reference to the parameters regarding the antiquity of Rajasthani paintings, Dr Goetz presented his research papers, which throw light on its history.[7] Karl Khandalawala discussed in detail the origin and development of this painting.[8]

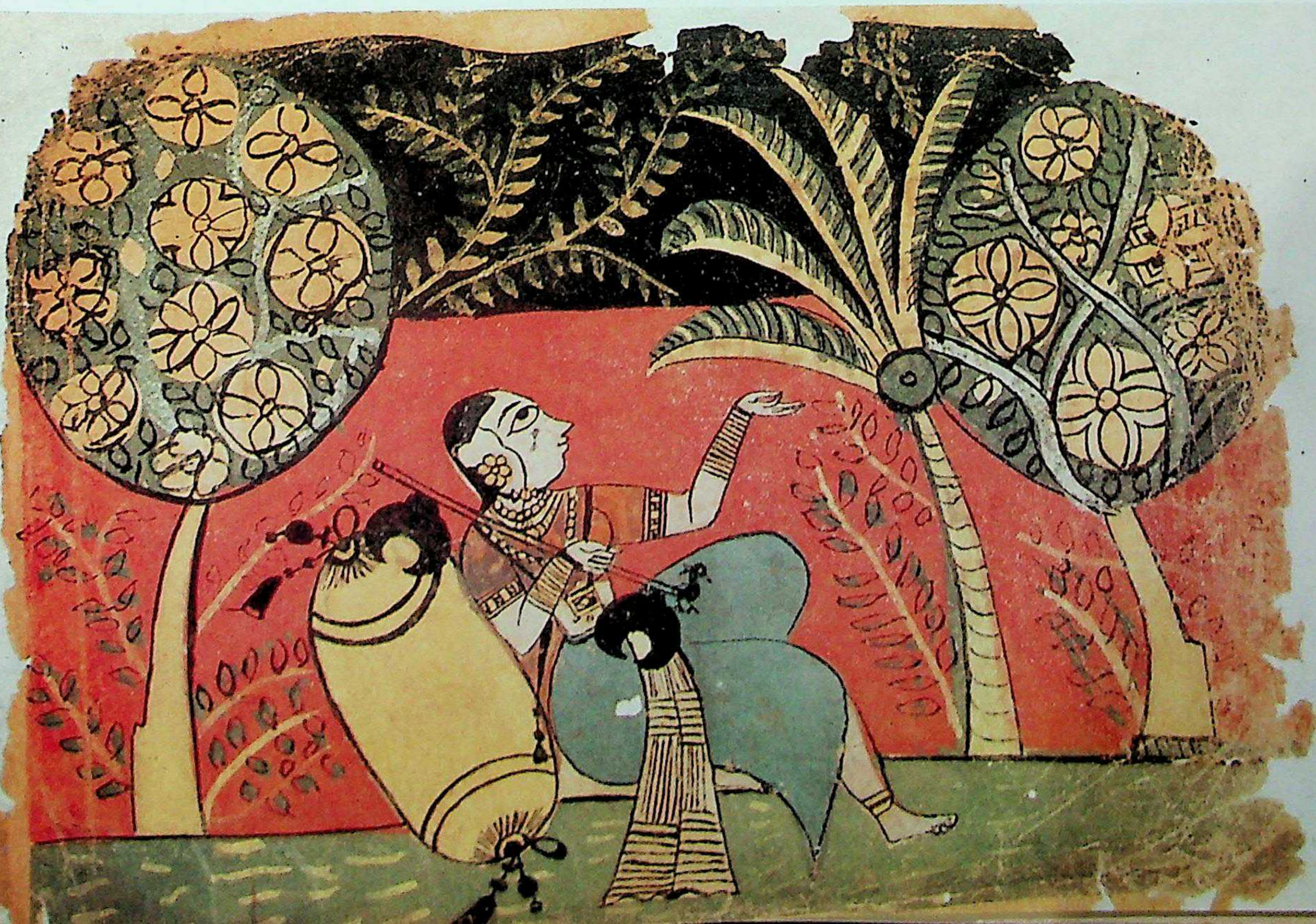
Great scholars like Raikrishan Dass, Pramod Chandra, Sangram Singh, Satya Prakash, Anand Krishan, Hiren Mukherji and others also published scholarly articles from time to time which highlight details of the origin and growth of Rajasthani painting. On the basis of this research and many available ancient paintings it is now generally admitted that Rajasthani painting is a significant link with traditional Indian painting.

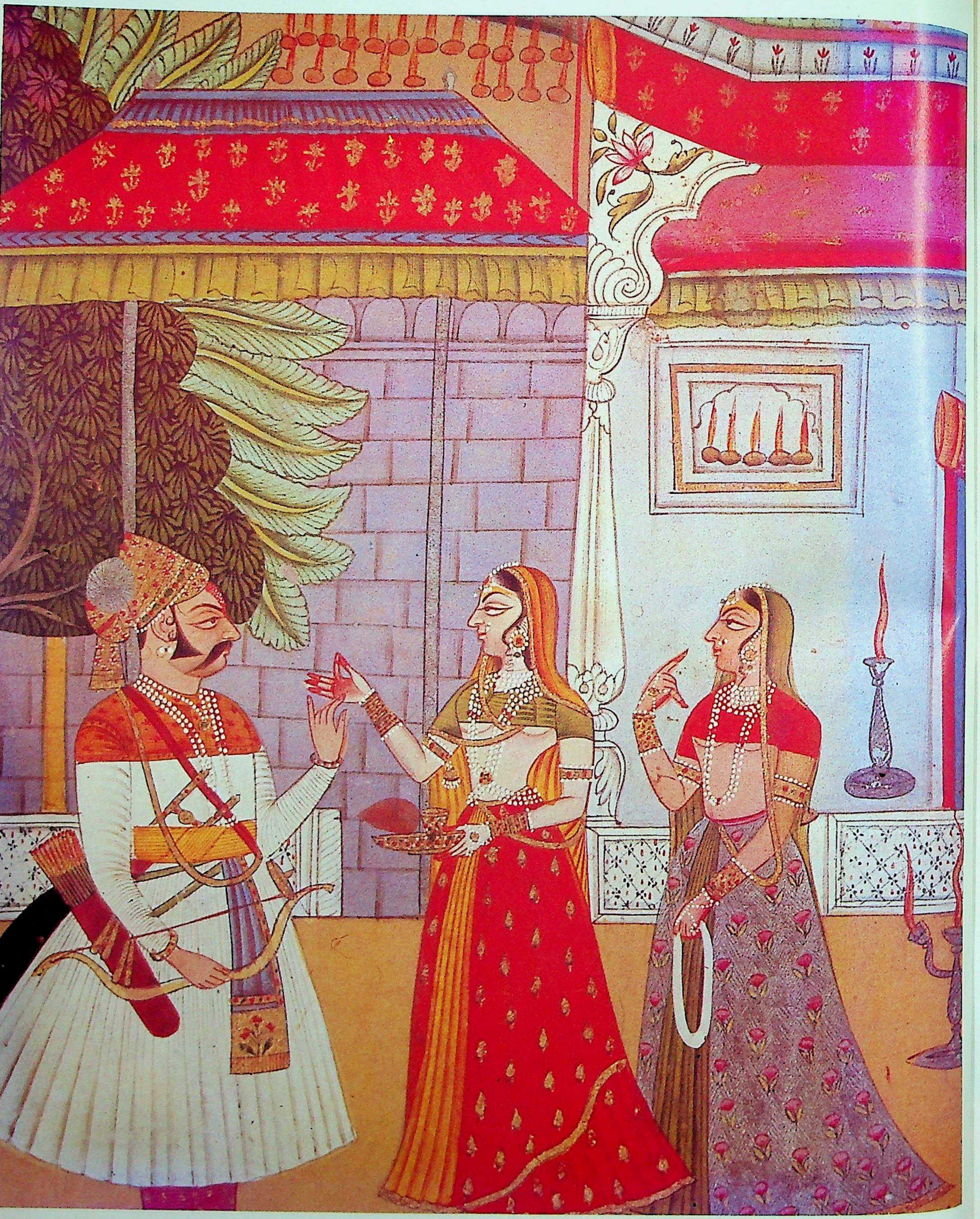
Tibetan historian Tara Nath (16th century) refers to an artist named Shri Rangdhar who lived in Maru Pradesh (Marwar) in the 7th century,[9] but paintings of this period are not available. The period from the 6th century to the 12th century was a great landmark in the history of Rajasthan. From the 8th to the 10th centuries this province was termed Gurjaratra, hence with the development of art and other vocations painting might have flourished here. Among available compilations, pictorial *Kalpa-Sutra* (Pls. 1, 2) authored by Bhadrabhau Swami in V.S. 1216 is the oldest available artistic text of India.[10]



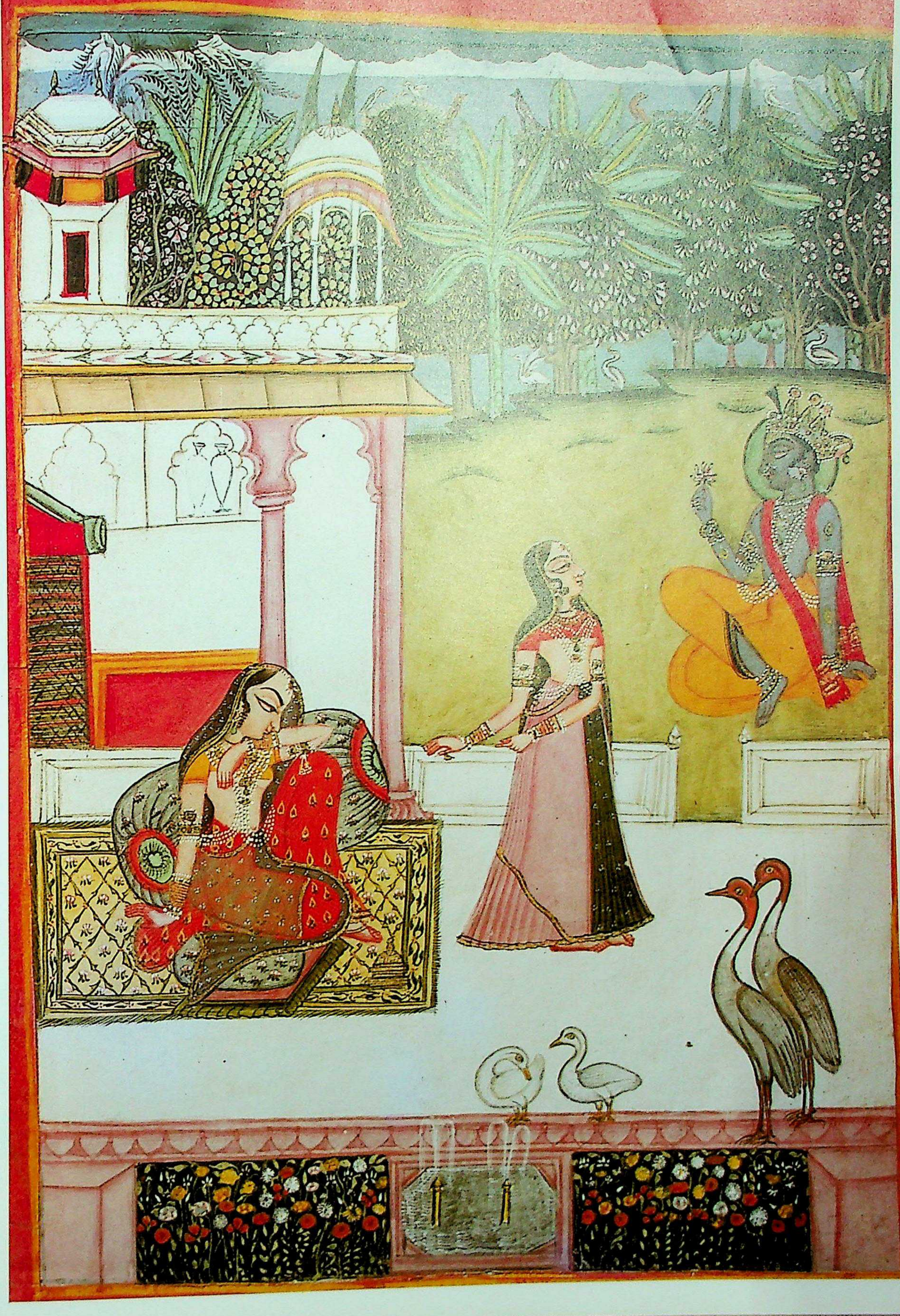
10. *Indra Prakop*, Sawar Sub-Style, 1725 A.D. Motichandra Khajanchi, Bikaner.

11. *Kakubha Ragini*, Marwar School (Pali) 1623 A.D. Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

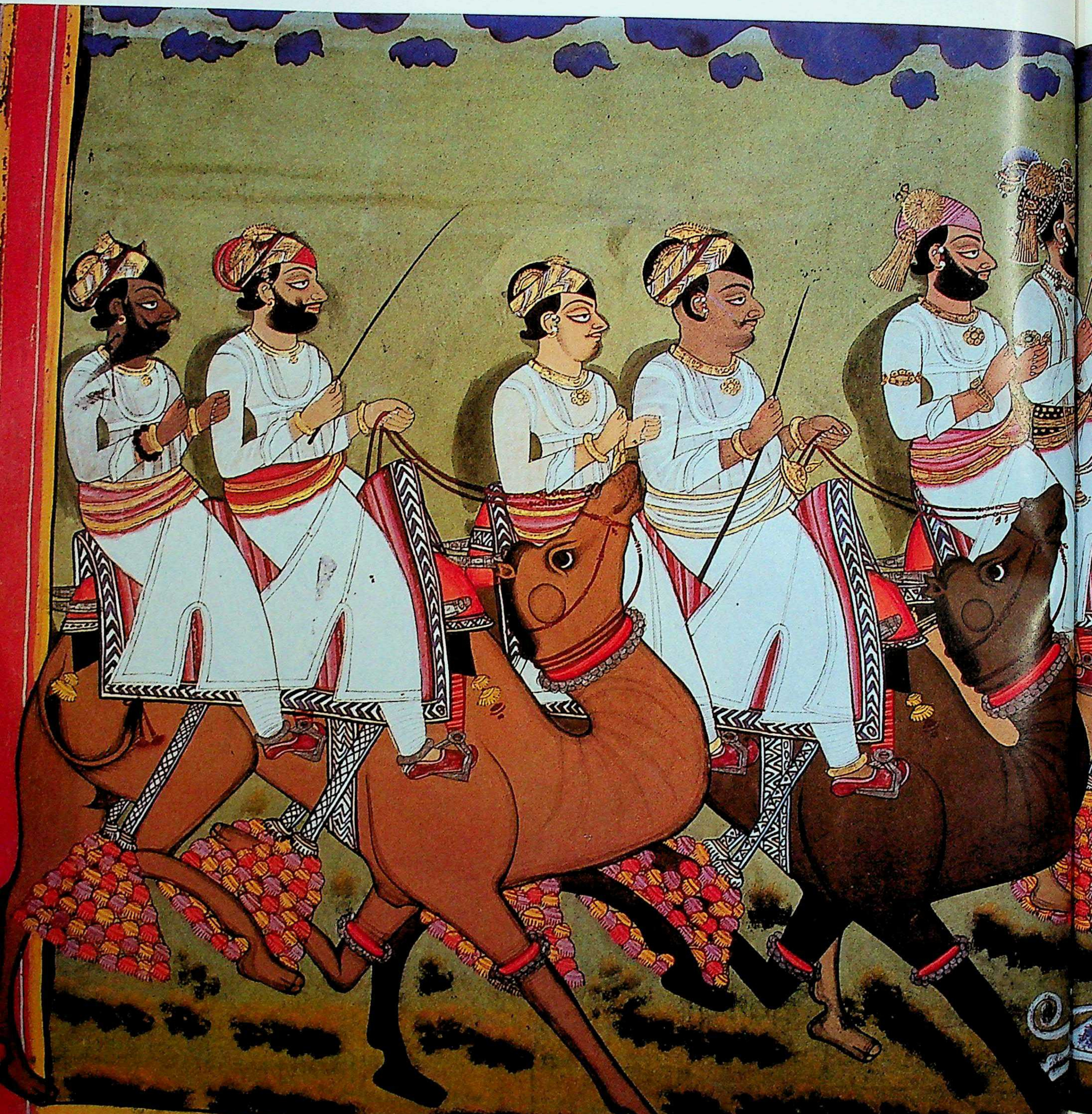


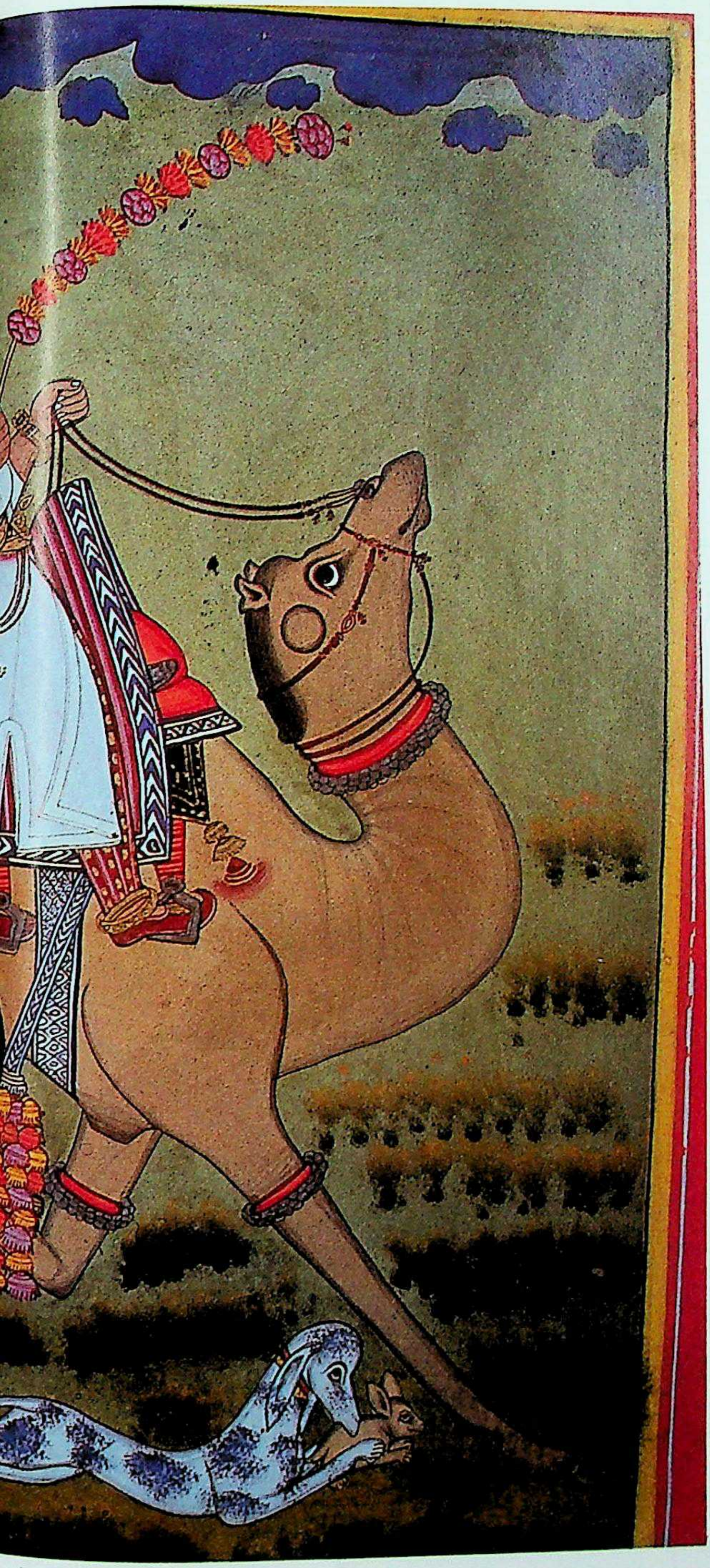


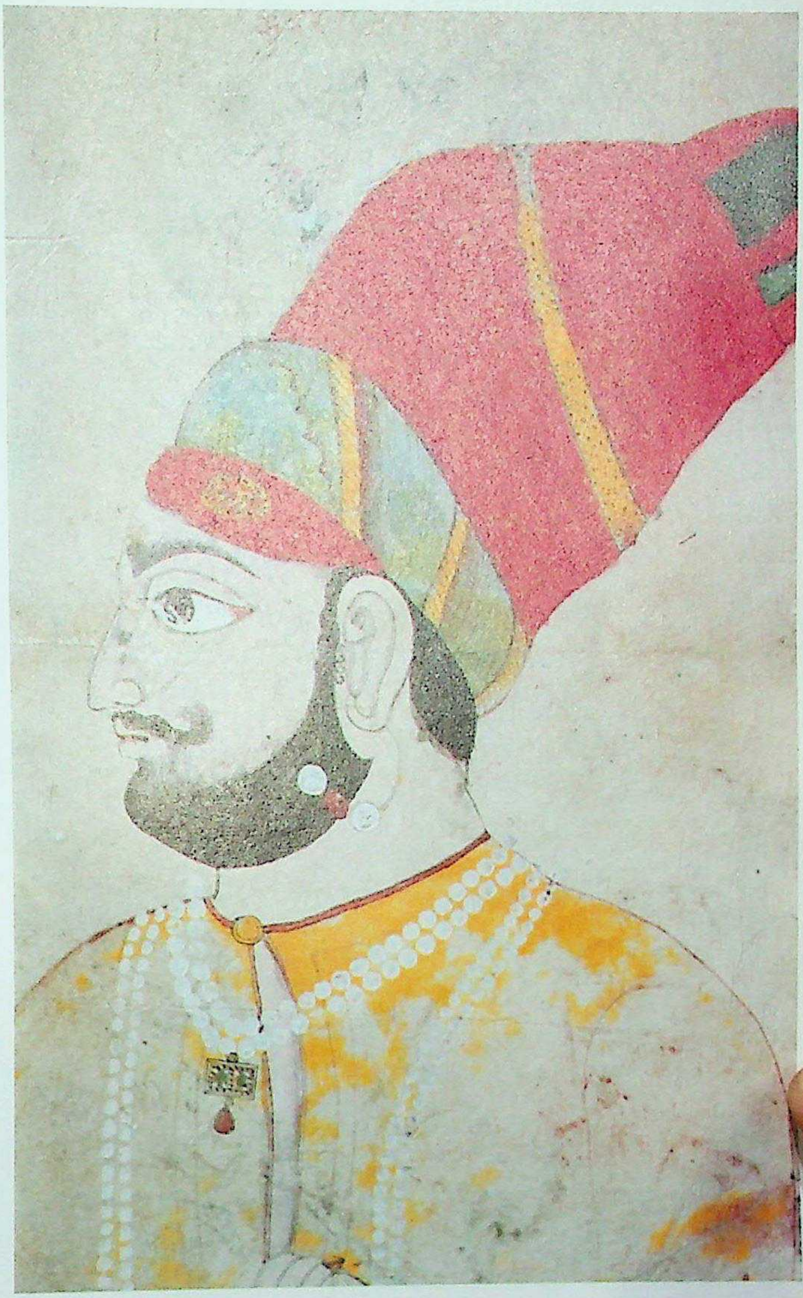
12. *Kartik Mass*, Jodhpur Style, 1775 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.



13. *Naika Bheda*, Jodhpur Style, 1800 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.



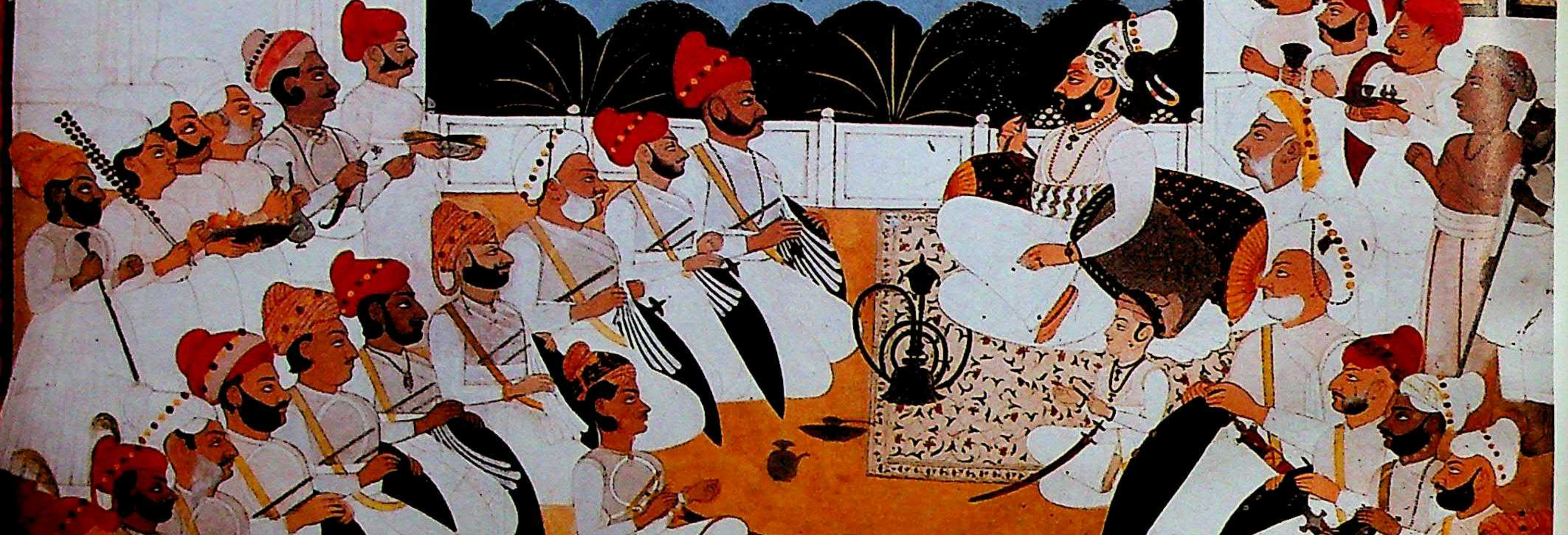




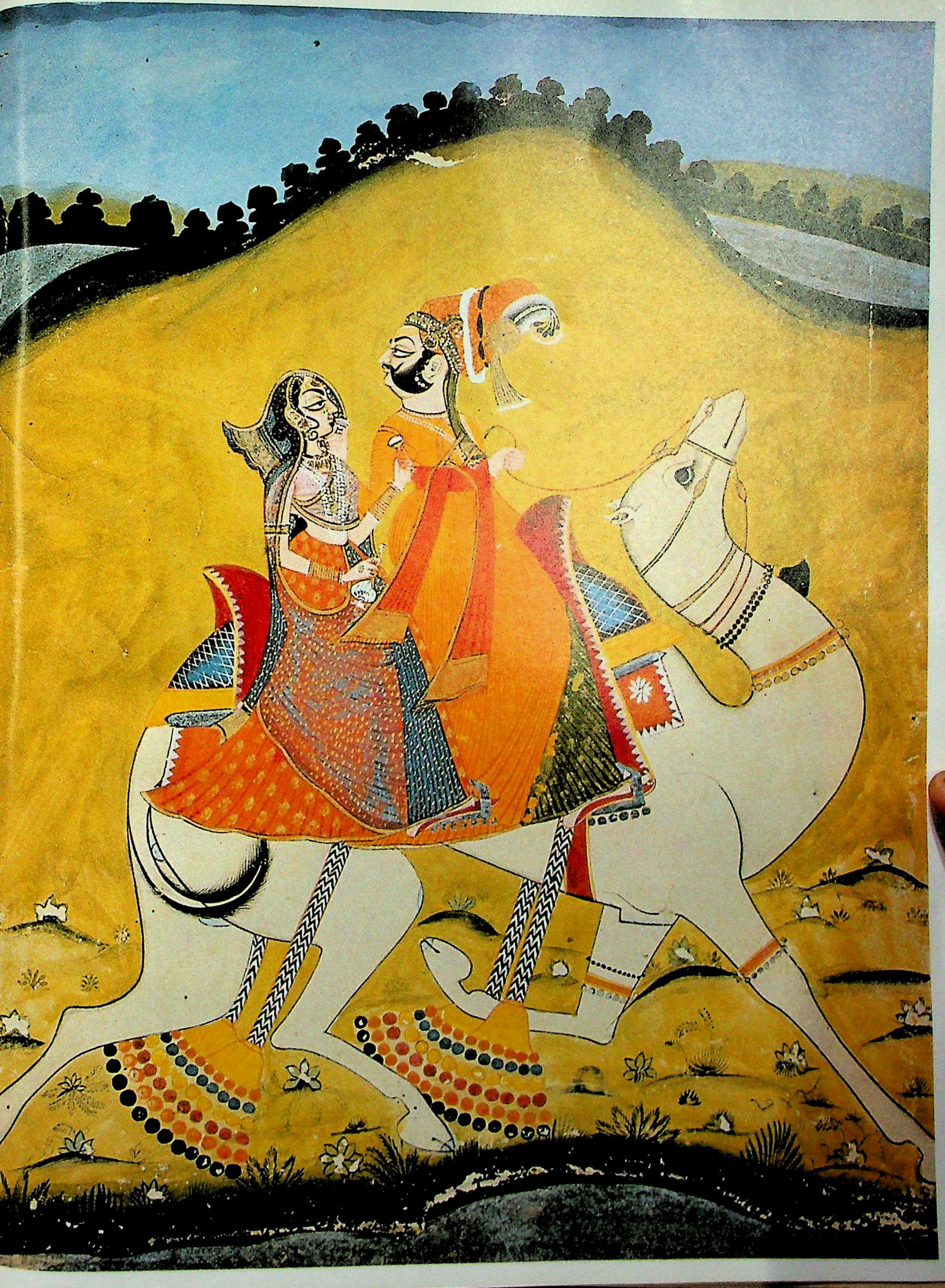
17. Maharaja Kumar Raj Singh, Bikaner Style, 1760 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

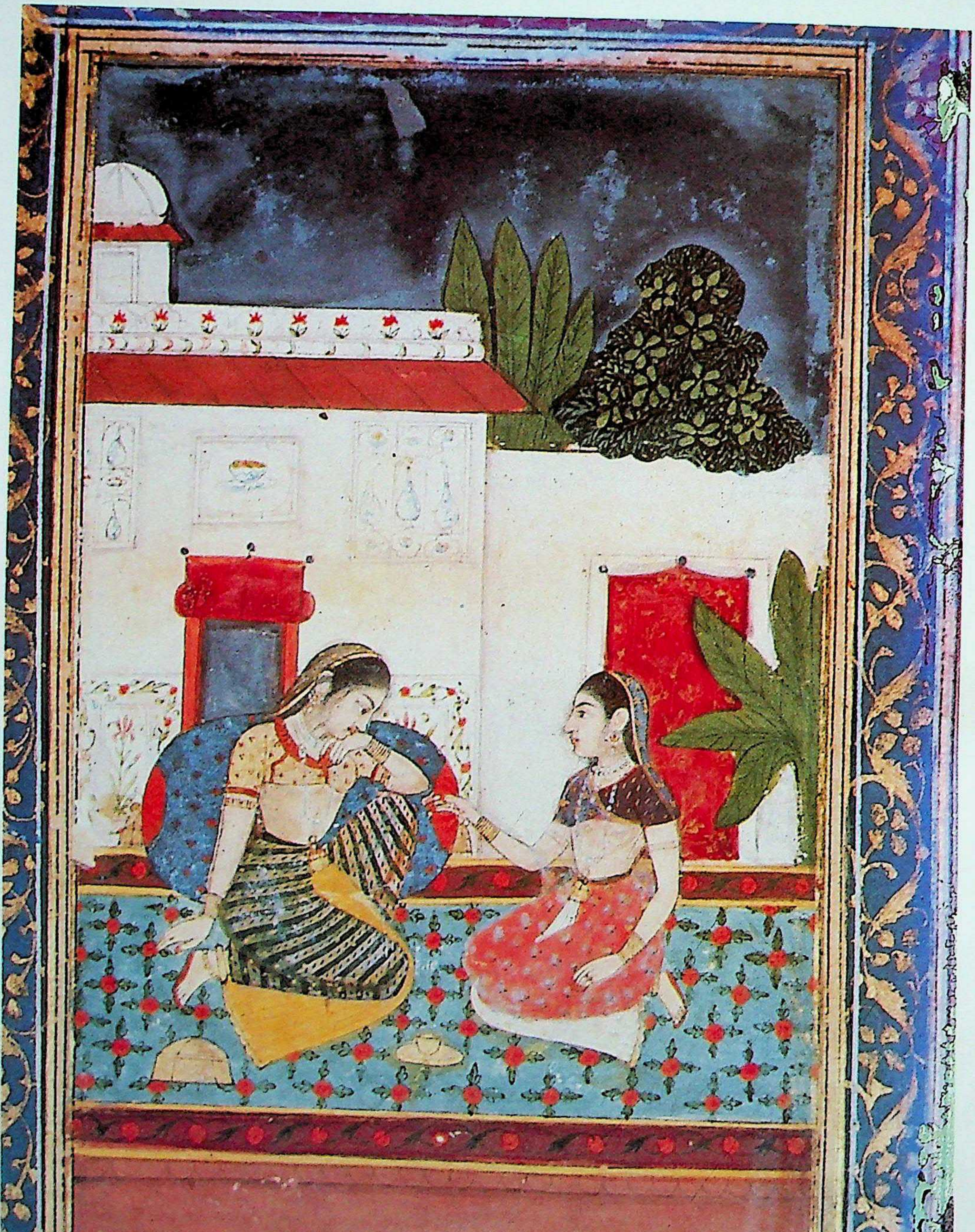
16. Camel-rider, Jodhpur Style, 1825 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

15. *Dhola Maru*, Jodhpur Style, 1810 A.D., Govt. Museum, Alw



14. *Dassehra Darbar*, Jodhpur Style, 1800 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.





18. *Ghanashri Ragni*, Bikaner Style, early 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

In Rajasthan the first available pictorial text (on palm leaves) is *Savag-Padikaban Sutt Chunni (Shravak Pratikraman Sutra Churni)*, compiled in the reign of Guhil Tej Singh at Ahar (Udaipur). Glimpses of his decorations are enshrined in intricate carvings in the temples of Nagda and Chittor.[11] Another important text is *Supasnah Chariyam (Suparshvanath Charitam)* which was painted and compiled in the reign of Mokkhal at Devkulpatak (Dilwara) in V.S. 1480 (A.D. 1422-23).

In this text the influence of the Gujarat and Jain styles on Rajasthani paintings is discernible. In the continuity of this style *Kalpa-Sutra* of 1426 deserves special mention. Its style of draping costumes is similar to that of the images of Vijaya Stambha of Maharana Kumbha. Around A.D. 1450 one copy of *Geet-Govind* and two of *Bal-Gopal-Stuti* had been painted in Western India. This is the first pictorial text of Lord Krishna which comprises the first seeds of preliminary Rajasthani painting.[12]

In 1451 *Basant-Vilas* painted in the Apbhransh style, whose famous background script was compiled by Acharya Ratnagiri in Ahmedabad, makes special mention of the origin of Rajasthani painting.[13] In the history of Mewar, Maharana Kumbha (1433-1468) had been highly acclaimed for having patronised poetry, music and architecture. That such a great lover of the arts remained indifferent to painting is not plausible. But in the absence of proof no concrete conclusion could be inferred. Only a glimpse of frescoes could be visualised in the ruins of the fort of Kumbhalgarh and the palace of Chittorgarh of that period.

Up to the 15th century this style of painting flourished in Rajasthan. Using Jain and later Jain texts as the basis on which the painting was done, this may be termed the Jain style, Gujarat style, Western India style or Apbhransh style. Undoubtedly, the period from the 7th century to the 15th century saw an era of impressive growth of painting, iconography and architecture in Rajasthan developed from the synthesis of original art and the traditions of Ajanta-Ellora. From this point no distinction had ever been made between the Rajasthan and Gujarat styles. In the regions of Bangur and Chhappan, many artists from Gujarat had settled and were known as Sompuras. During the reign of Maharana Kumbha, the legendary artist Shilpi Mandan migrated here from Gujarat.[14]

After analysing the above-mentioned pictorial texts from the 12th century to the 15th century, it could be established that such paintings contained the seeds of the Rajasthani styles of painting. The basis of most of these paintings is Jain texts. In these paintings faces are *savachashma*, noses resembling that of Garuda, tall but stiff figures, highly embossed breasts, mechanical movements and poses, clouds, trees, mountains and rivers are depicted. Red and yellow colours have been used frequently.

It is difficult to tell where preliminary Rajasthani painting flourished in the 15th century, but on the basis of other pictorial texts it may be stated that the amended form of Rajasthani painting of that age had developed with some distinct features. *Adi Puran*, decorated with 417 paintings, was a text in the Gujarati style compiled in 1540. It was a beacon in the annals of Indian painting.[15]

Although influenced by Apbhransh style, this text, symbolic of Rajasthani painting in respect of colour drawing, physical structure, depiction of nature, dress, expression of sentiment, enjoys a prestigious position. Avadhi poetry *Mrigvati*[16] (decorated with 250 paintings) and pictorial *lorchanda*[17] belong to this category of text. In the pictorial texts of *Sanghrani-Sutra* (1583)[18] and *Uttaradhyan* Sutra (1591),[19] mention was made that a revised form of Rajasthani painting had been created.

In pictorial *Chorpancha-Sika*[20] and *Geet-Govind*[21] texts of that age, this school of painting was appreciably represented. Regarding Rajasthani paintings, two very significant texts are available. They are based on the Bhagwad.

The first[22] in 1598 and the other[23] in 1610 had probably been painted somewhere in Rajasthan. In them developed the shape of Rajasthani painting with its special characteristics that had emerged. *Rag-Mala*[24] pictures painted by Nasiruddin at Chavand, capital of Maharana Pratap, are the first available specimens of paintings solely created on the soil of Rajasthan. Traditions of the later period are noticed in the Mewar school.

On the basis of these facts I submit that the birthplace of Rajasthani painting was only Rajasthan, and Medapat (Mewar) was its centre of growth. In reality the Rajasthani style was a new development of the Apbhransh style. In other words, in place of the process of decline taking place in the 9th-10th centuries, a phase of development had begun in the 15th century. This revival might have taken place in Gujarat and southern Rajasthan (Mewar).[25] Other leading scholars identify Mewar with the origin and growth of Rajasthani painting. Dr Goetz also firmly holds this opinion.

Those tracts come under the hill states of Mewar, Banswara and Eder in southern Rajasthan which were ruled by the Suryavanshi dynasty from ancient times. These rulers continued to carry the torch of Indian culture even after the disintegration of the Gupta Empire. Hence these rulers had absorbed the high traditions of Ajanta and Ellora up to the medieval age.

The beginning of the pure Rajasthani style has been fixed between the latter half of the 15th century and the early part of the 16th century, probably around 1500. The Rajasthani style emerged from the Apbhransh style (Pl. 3) in Gujarat and was influenced by the Kashmir style in the 15th century. Some such paintings have been found in which the impact of the Mughal style is nowhere discernible. The Bengali Ragini paintings of Bharat Kala Bhawan is one of them. The above view of Raikrishan Dass[26] seems authentic today as at the time Rajasthani painting was taking shape Babar, grandfather of Akbar and founder of the Mughal Empire in India, was born in 1463. Mehmood Begra, Sultan of Gujarat, and Maharana Kumbha both earned great reputation as keen lovers of art. In the same period painting had attained its zenith in Kashmir in the reign of Jainul Abdin, when probably a cultural exchange between friendly states might have taken place.

Because of the emergence of the Rajasthani style in Gujarat and Mewar the dormant consciousness of Indian painting awakened. It was a new version of the Apbhransh style. From the point of expression of sentiments and depiction of drawings, even though the Rajput style had emerged in its unique perspective, in selection of theme it had faithfully followed the Apbhransh style. Very artistic paintings depicting Rag-Mala, *Shringar*, descriptions of Barah-Masa and Krishna-Lila were the contribution of the Rajput style, which had its origin in the Apbhransh style.[27]

Some scholars recognise the Gujarati style as the mother of Rajasthani painting and its guiding spirit. Pramod Chandra says: "Gujarat was a principal centre where Rajasthani painting acquired its prominent status . . ."[28] Shri Manju Lal Ranchhor Dass Majumdar observes: "The Gujarat style gave birth to the Rajput style, that rare beauty visible in drawings of mountain, river, sea, fire, cloud, tree in the Rajput style originated from the Gujarat style."[29]

In regard to the impact of Jain art, many scholars stress the view that it made a significant contribution to the growth of Hindu-Rajput art. Jain art was responsible for incorporating creeper foliage in Indian painting. Later, having surrendered the traditional heritance to the Rajput style, Jain art was lost in oblivion. Dr Yajdani comments: "Jain art does not represent the best art of its period." Hence it is argued that it might have surrendered its traditions to the Rajput style, but it would be a great blunder on our part to admit this view.[30]

Rajasthani painting originated in the state of Rajasthan alone. Having been greatly influenced by other styles of painting, it flourished greatly in this state. In its growth the ancient history of the state and its geography played a major role. On the heroic soil of the Rajputs, evidence of their chivalrous deeds and the imprint of their civilisation and culture in the shape of poetry, painting, architecture are scattered here and there.

Classification

The origin and development of Rajasthani painting, like many other schools, did not take place in one area, nor was it cultivated by only a few artists. In all ancient towns and religious and cultural centres of Rajasthan painting blossomed and flourished. Royal courts, religious centres, rulers, feudal lords made a valuable contribution to the growth of Rajasthani painting, which reached its pinnacle of glory in the 17th-18th centuries after having enriched the styles and substyles of other erstwhile states, as a result of which its coordinated shape came into existence.

In regard to the classification of Rajasthani styles, scholars hold divergent views. Artists of different states who painted in their own styles conform to local conditions. The distinct characteristic of painting thus produced has been termed the style of that particular region. In this way, several styles came into prominence in Rajasthan, notably the Mewar, Marwar, Kishangarh, Bundi, Kota, Jaipur, and Alwar schools had achieved great ascendancy.

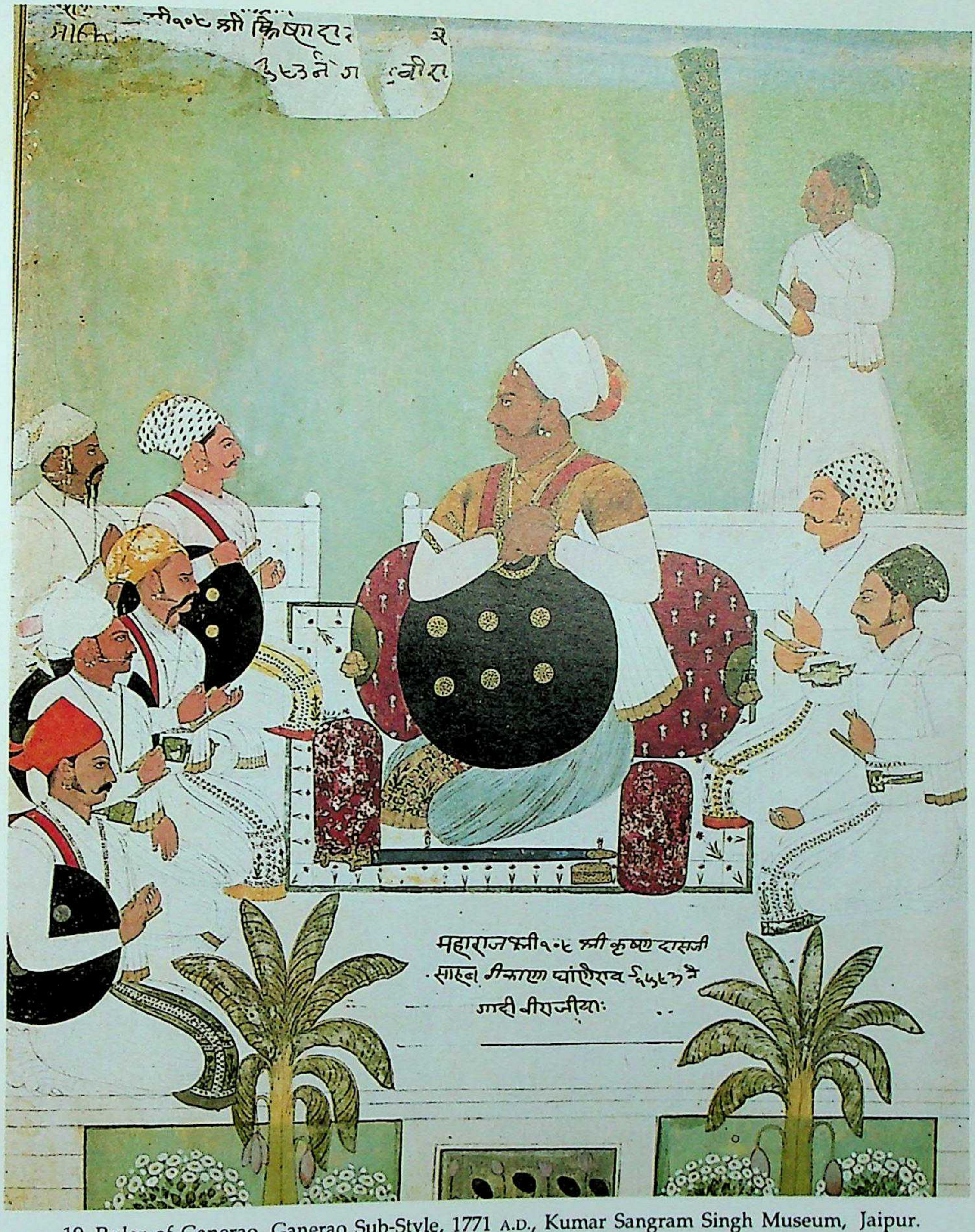
Dr Moti Chandra mainly recognises the Mewar, Bundi and Kishangarh schools. Scholars like Dr Goetz, Karl Khandalawala, Ram Gopal Vijayavargia, Kumar Sangram Singh added more styles and substyles pertaining to Marwar, Bikaner, Kota, Jaipur, Uniara and Devgarh etc. In 1969 I worked on the authenticity of Alwar style.[31]

From the point of geographical and administrative conditions, Rajasthani painting may be studied after classifying it in four parts. In actual practice it has four principal schools in which many styles and substyles flourished and influenced each other:

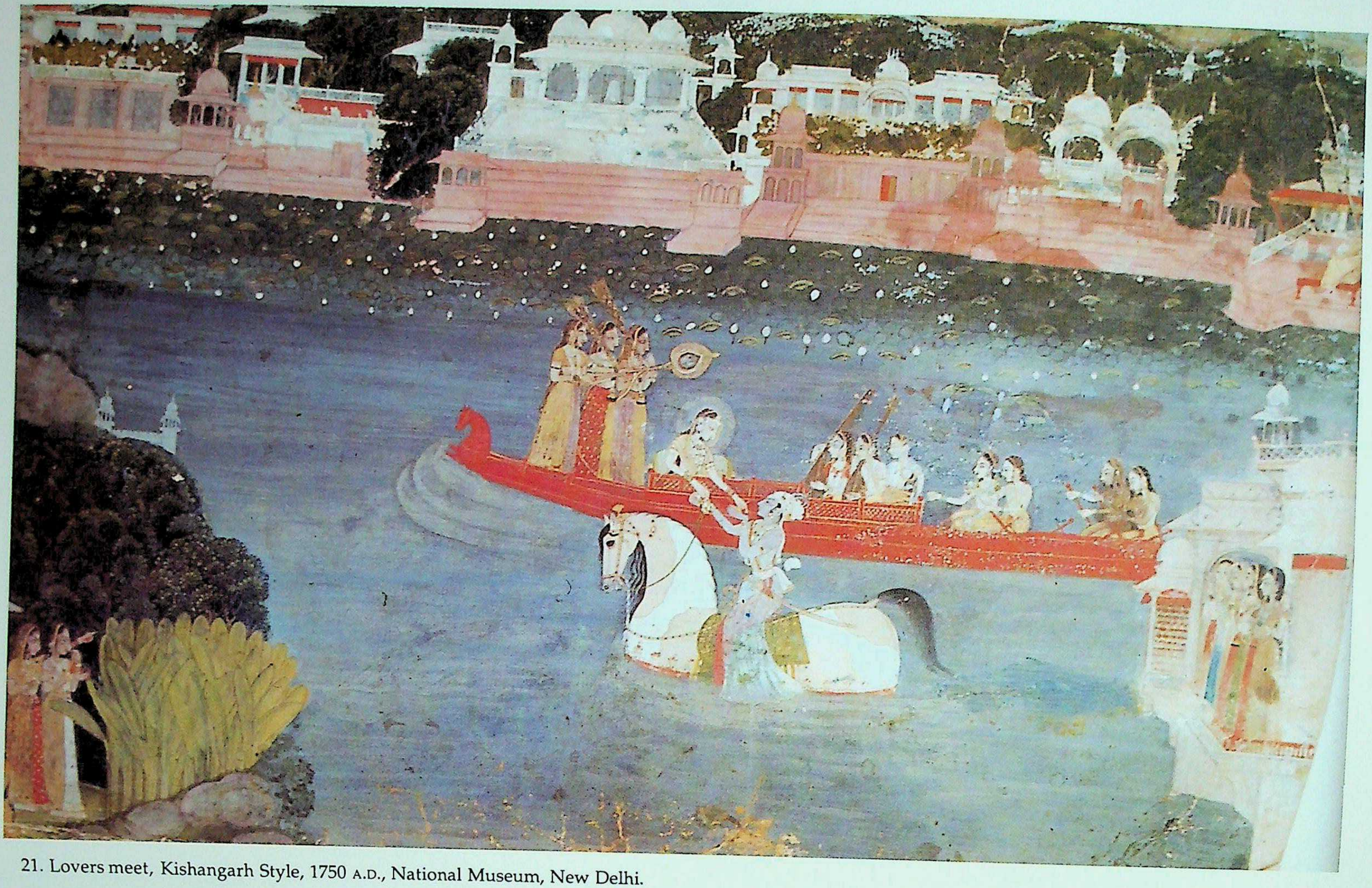
(1) The Mewar school comprising Chavand, Udaipur, Devgarh, Nathdwara, Sawar styles and substyles.

(2) The Marwar school comprising Jodhpur, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Jaisalmer, Pali, Naugore, Ghanerao styles and substyles.

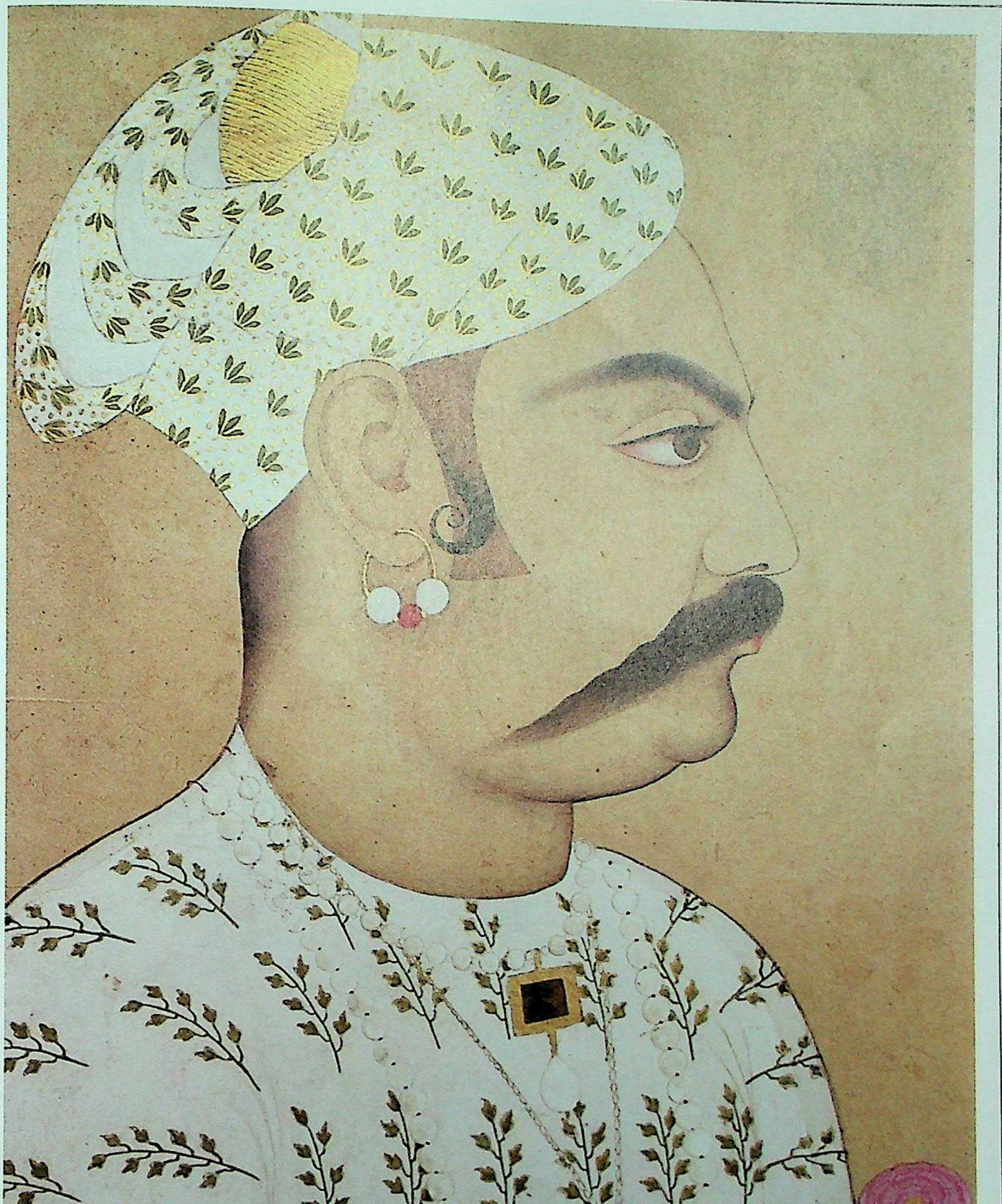
(3) The Hadoti school comprising Bundi, Kota, Jhalawar styles and substyles.


महाराज श्री १०८ श्री कृष्णदासजी
साहब गीराण घांणेराव १८२८ मै
गादी बीराजीया:

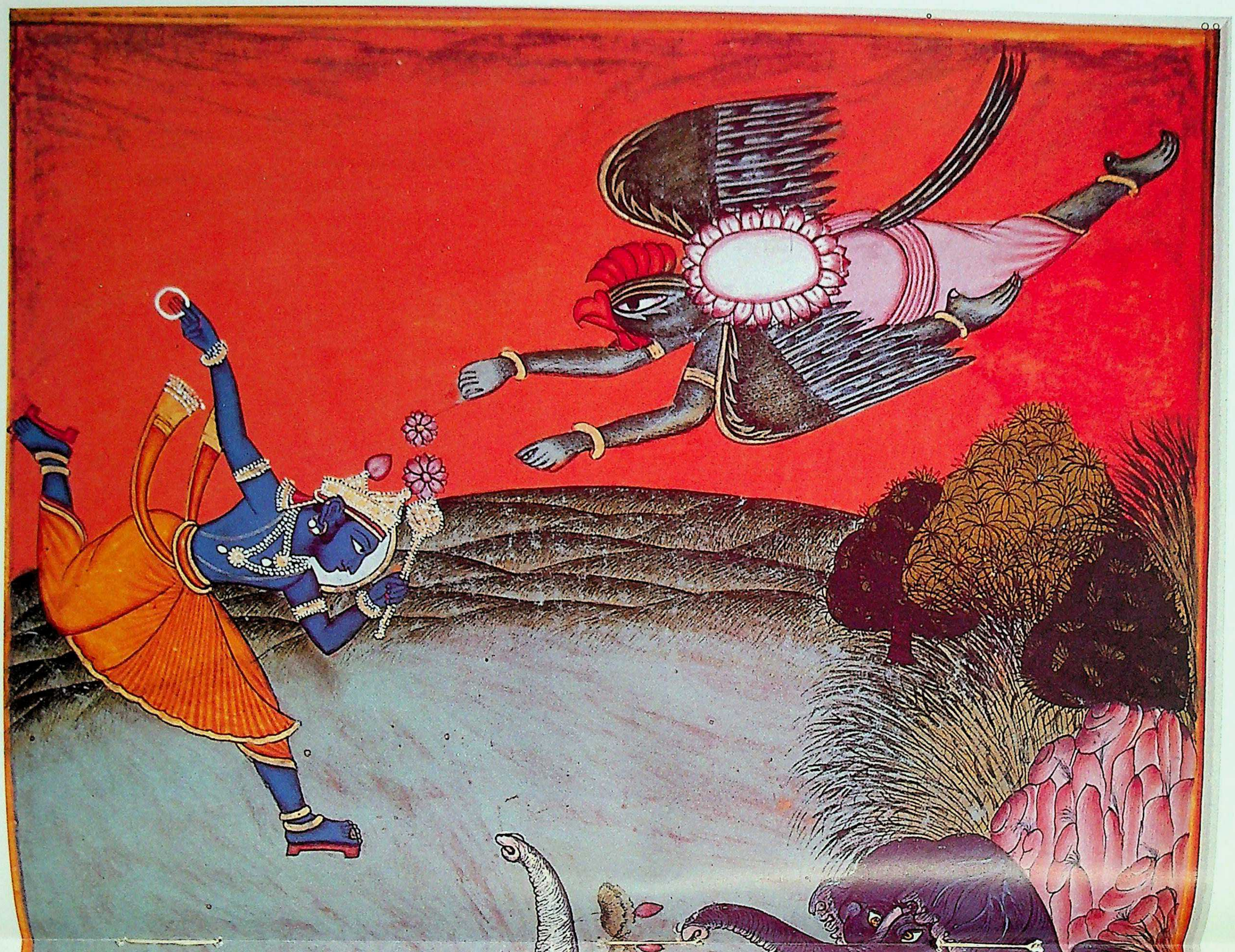
19. Ruler of Ganerao, Ganerao Sub-Style, 1771 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

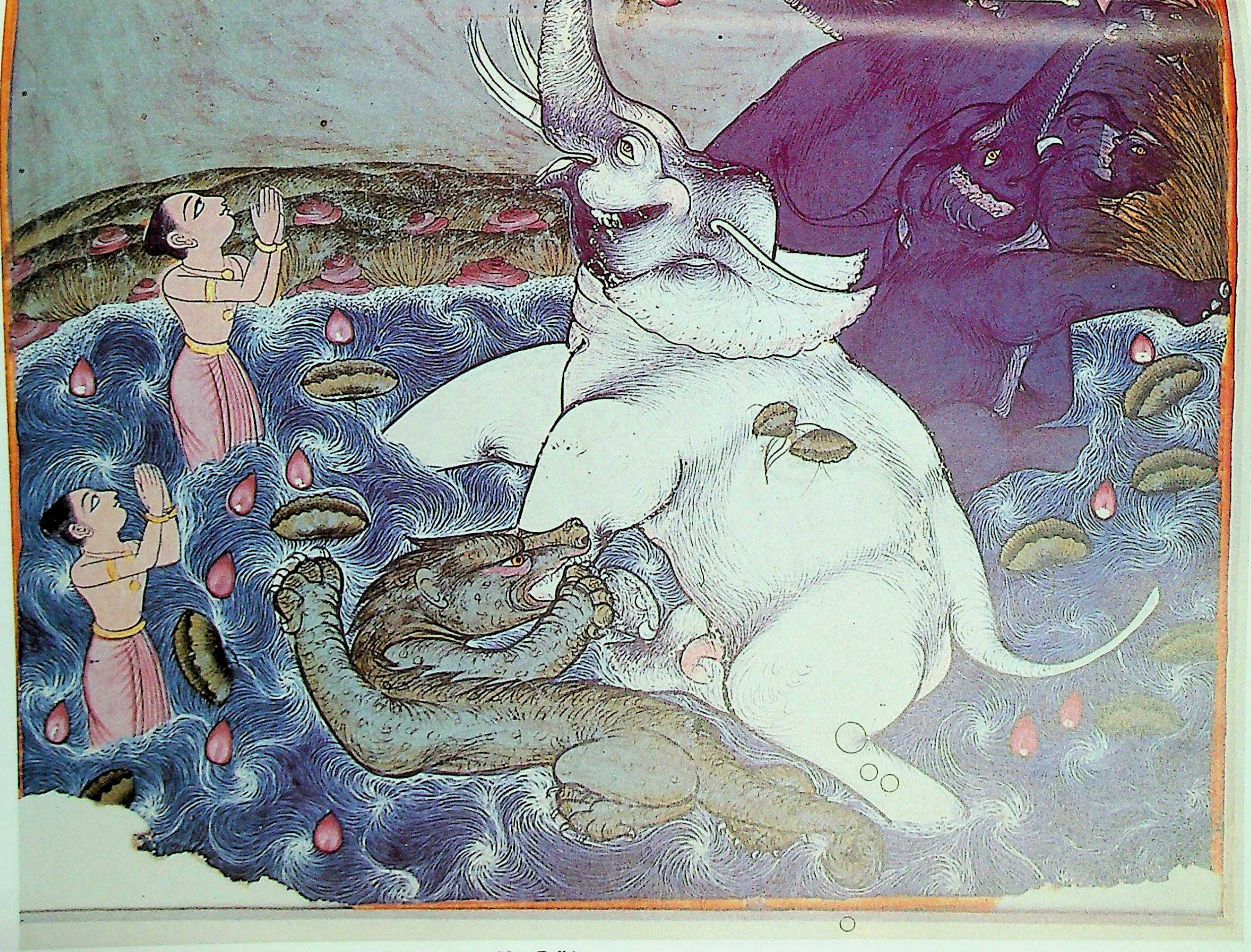


21. Lovers meet, Kishangarh Style, 1750 A.D., National Museum, New Delhi.

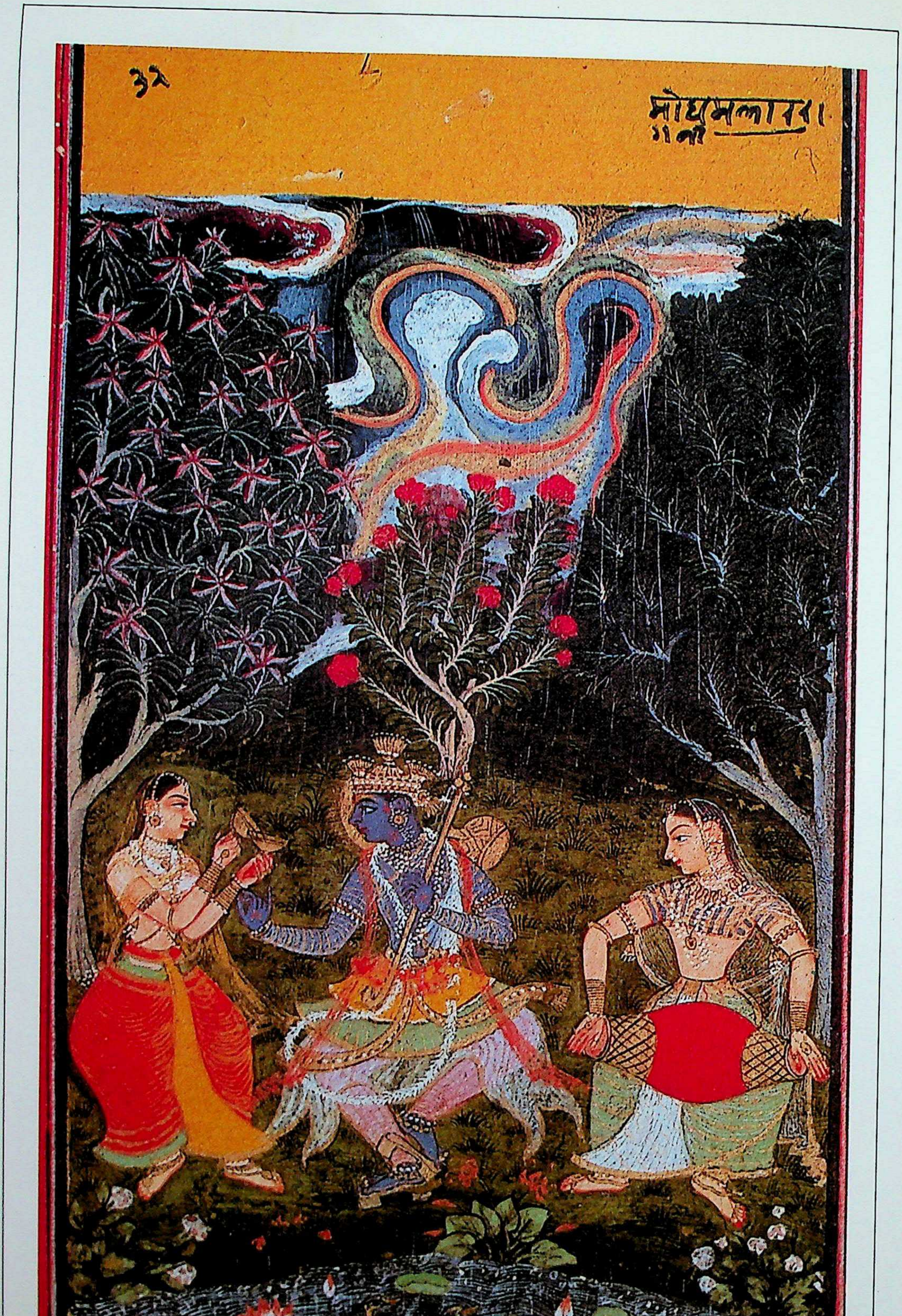


22. A Samant, (Raja Pabuji) Ajmer Sub-Style, 1698 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur. Artist Chand.

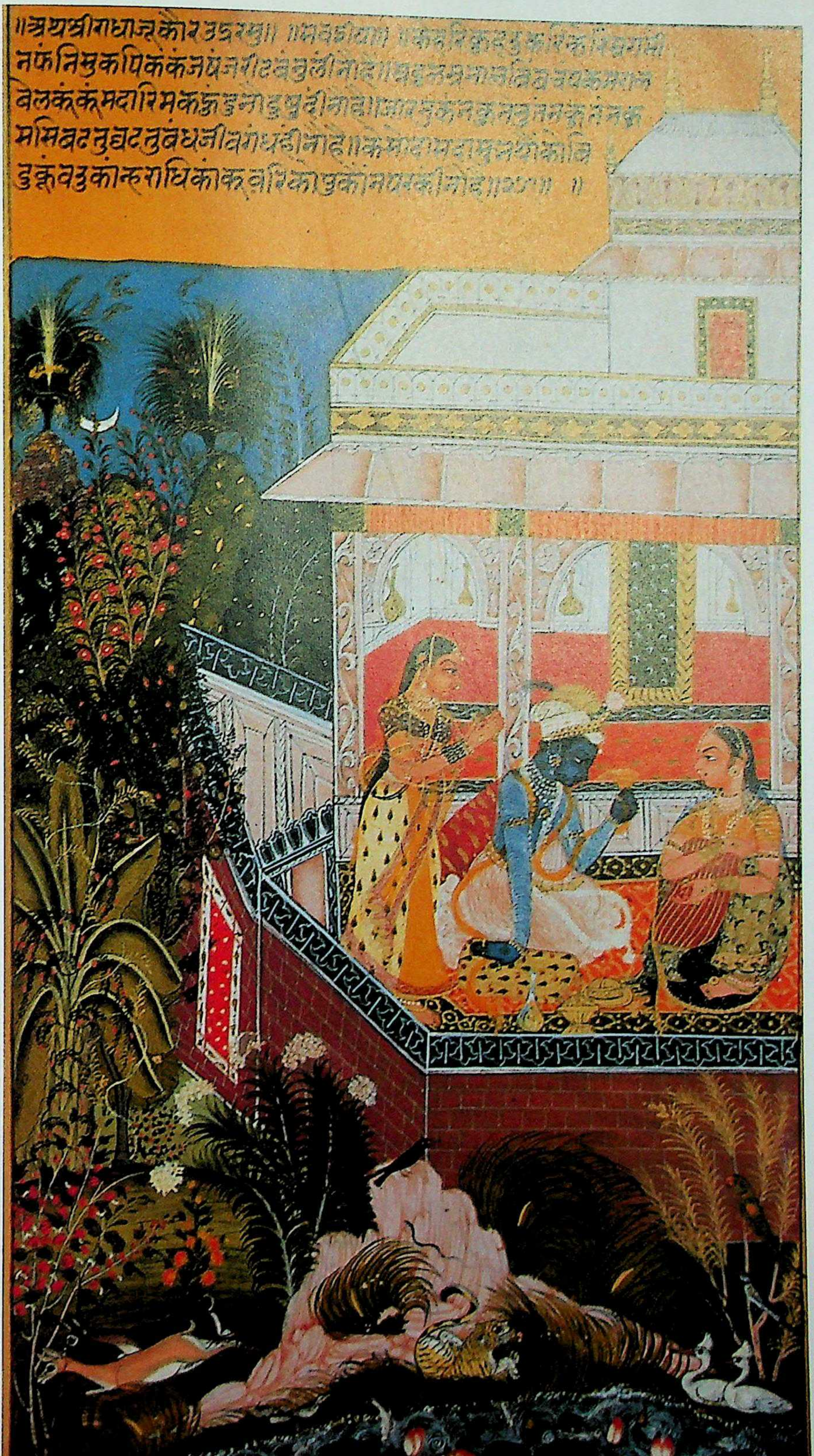




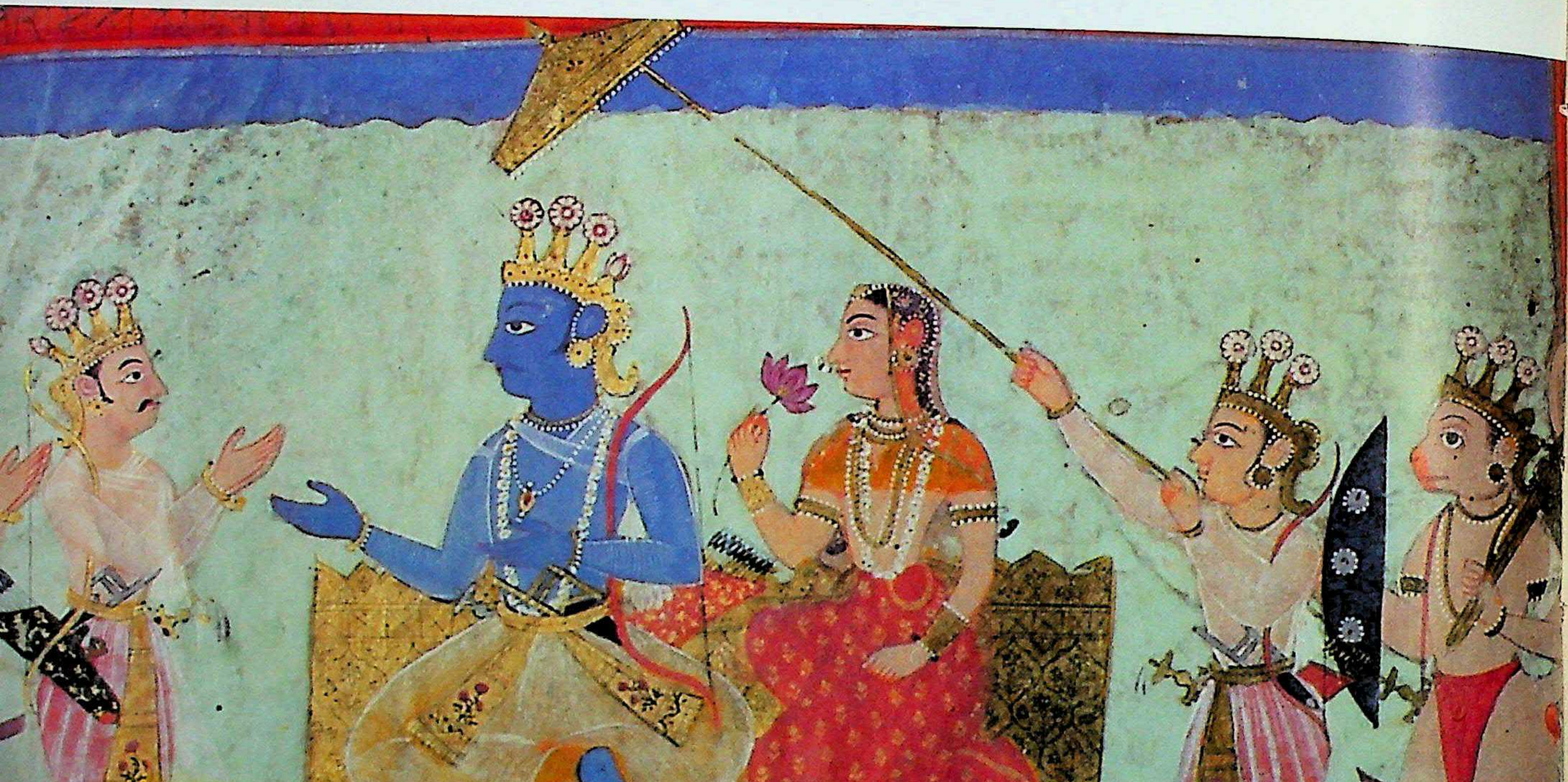
25. *Gajendra Moksa*, Bundi Style, 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.



23. *Megh Malhar Ragini*, Bundi Style, 1675 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.



24. *Rasik Priya* (Shri Radhika ju ko Roudra Rasa), Bundi Style, 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.



20. *Panchayatan*, Sirohi Style, 1650 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

(4) The Dhundar school comprising Amber, Jaipur, Shekhawati, Uniara, Alwar styles and substyles.

Having placed the styles and substyles of the whole of Rajasthan within the purview of the above schools, a detailed study of them could be undertaken. In the medieval age it was quite natural for the small and big states of Rajasthan and the neighbouring states to influence each other in the domain of culture.

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27. Vachaspati Garrola, Bharatiya Chitrakala, p. 136.
28. 'An outline of an early Rajasthani painting', *Marg*, 11/2.
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CHAPTER II

MEWAR SCHOOL

From the point of view of historical traditions in Rajasthani painting the Mewar school occupies first place. The artistic heritage of Medpat, the land of Guhil rulers, was a perennial source of inspiration for ancient and other schools of art. Paintings of Mewar earned wide publicity among other styles and substyles, and paintings of the Udaipur, Nathdwara and Devgarh styles are immortal legacies of this school.

The preliminary and original form of Rajasthani painting, which had emerged from a synthesis, is visible in the Mewar school. Some artists and Guhil rulers of Vallabhipur came to Mewar and applied the Ajanta traditions with tremendous success.[1] This tradition, after having assimilated local features, maintained its original identity and was known as the Mewar school of painting.

Historical Background

When did the Mewar school of Indian painting come into existence? Connoisseurs of art have speculated on this point as great centres of art like Chavand and Chittor had time and again been devastated in numerous onslaughts by enemies. Hence even today the history of Mewar is shrouded in ignorance.

King Rana Kumbha (1443-1468) was a keen student of architecture, literature, music and the other arts. That this ruler was indifferent to painting is a view that does not seem acceptable, but the history of painting in the 15th century remains in oblivion. Rana Sanga (1509-1520) spent his life waging wars against the Mughal ruler Babar.

A great centre of the arts, Chittor had been devastated in constant wars, and Udai Singh (1537-1572) made Udaipur his capital because of its strategic location. Maharana Pratap (1572-1597) never accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals and established Chavand, situated in a mountainous region, as his capital. Chittor, Chavand and Udaipur earned a great reputation as centres of early Mewari painting.

Amar Singh (1597-1620) partially accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals, and for this reason the impact of Mughal art on Mewar painting was significant, particularly in the reigns of Karan Singh and Jagat Singh (1628-1652). Raj Singh (1652-1680), having rejected the suzerainty of Aurangzeb, installed a statue of Shri Nathji in Nathdwara and thus exhibited his deep devotion to the Vaishnav sect. The Pushti sect began to influence Mewari art. Raj Singh, a keen lover of art, was a Pushti margi, hence in his reign the arts flourished. Jai Singh (1680-1696) and Amar Singh (1698-1710) provided a further impetus to Mewar art.

From these facts, the role of Mewar in developing Rajasthani art from its very beginning is abundantly clear. On the basis of researches, the first example of the Mewar style is the pictorial text titled *Shravak Pratikraman Churni*, which was painted in Adhar (Ahar-Udaipur) in 1260 in the reign of Guhil Tej Singh.[2] Its decoration resembles the intricate artistic workmanship of temples dedicated to Mokul in Nagda, Udaipur and Chittor.

The distinct features of this style include *savachashma*, a nose resembling an eagle's, eyes similar to *parvalli-fank*, long figures and plentiful use of red-yellow colours. Examples of it are referred to in *Supasnah Chariyam*, a pictorial text compiled and painted at Devkulapatak (Dilwara) in the reign of Mokul around 1422-23.[3] In that text, the imprint of the Jain and Gujarati schools, along with the above-named features of Rajashani painting, is clearly visible. In this style Kalpa-Sutra (1426) deserves special mention. The style of its drapery resembles that of the images of Vijay-Stambh of Kumbha.[4]

For many centuries this pervaded most of the painting in Western India in general and Mewar in particular. The forts of Maharana Kumbha (Kumbhalgarh) and Kumbha Palace (Chittorgarh) possess frescoes which depict the salient features of paintings of that age. Only faint glimpses of these frescoes are now visible. In the 16th century, Chavand, the capital of Maharana Pratap, earned the reputation of being a great centre of art. In 1605, Rag-Mala was painted at Chavand with the impact of folk art and the imprint of the Mewar style.[5] Nayak-nayika had a series painted in 1640 definitely in the Mewar style, and it also should the partial influence of the Mughal style of the Jehangir period.[6]

Many pictorial texts painted in the Mewar style in the middle of the 17th century and in the reign of Maharana Jagat Singh (1628-52) are available (Pls. 4, 5). Because of the growth of the Vallabha sect in Rajasthan, the Radha-Krishna Lila was the main contribution of the Mewar style. Hence Bhagwad-Puran was the main subject of painting. In the text of Bhagwad-Puran painted by Sahabadi (1648) and preserved in the Bhandarkar Institute, Pune, the Maharaja of Jodhpur Museum and the National Museum, fine examples of the Mewar style are available.

In this period of composing poems with the Krishna-Lila legend as basis, paintings were created on a large scale symbolic of the cult of Krishna-Bhakti in Mewar. Pictorial texts concerning *Sursagar* (Pl. 4), *Rasikpriya* (Pl. 5), *Rag-Mala*, Ramayan are available in the Mewar style. Scenes of the Ramayan painted in 1651 and preserved in the State Museum, Udaipur, and paintings created by the artist Honhar in 1649 and preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, are also available. Many pictures painted on the basis of stanzas of *Sursagar* are still available in the custody of Gopi Krishna Kanodia, Calcutta, and in the private collections of Sangram Singh, Ram Gopal Vijayavargia, Jaipur and National Museum, New Delhi (Pl. 4).

The period of Maharana Jagat Singh (1628-52) was the Golden Age of the development of Mss painting and other arts. The paintings based on the *Ram Charit* and *Krishna Charit* are a valuable art-heritage even now. Sahi Badeen and other talented painters gave a new life to Mewari art.

Maharana Raj Singh (1652-1681) also maintained the tradition of his father. During his period, paintings based on a number of Sanskrit-writings, books of *Bhakti* and *Ritikaleen* periods were made in abundance. The paintings of *Shukar Kshatra Mahatamya* made by the famous painter Sahi Badeen in 1655 and *Bhramar Geet Sar* in 1659, a few leaves of which are preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi, hint at the evolution of Mewar style. A few pages of Geet Govind set painted during this period, preserved in Govt. Museum, Udaipur, are exceedingly artistic.

During the reign of Maharana Jai Singh (1680-1698) the Mewar painting-tradition developed with a new vigour. One hundred twenty-two miniature paintings of Sursagar preserved in the Govt. Museum, Udaipur, are the achievements of this period. In these, Surdas has been painted in various gestures such as holding cymbals (Majira) in his hands, engaged in Kirtan, or posed with folded hands. The *Uttarkand* of the Ramayan and hundreds of Mahabharat pictures were painted during this period. Maharana Amar Singh II (1698-1710) also gave a fillip to

Mewar painting tradition in which the drawing of a number of sketches occupies an important place.

In the reign of Maharana Sangram Singh (1710-1734) also this tradition went on quite ceaselessly. The continuing tradition of Geet-Govind painting is linked with the 'Set' (bearing the name of Roop Ji Bhatt Samvat 1771—A.D. 1714) available at Govt. Museum, Udaipur. The important set of *Bihari Sat Sai* with Jagannath Kavi Raj's Colophon (1719) is preserved at Saraswati Bhandar, Udaipur. In addition to these, a number of group-paintings were also made. These paintings present life-like depiction of feudal life.

Even in the last phase of the eighteenth century, the Mewari painting kept on displaying feudal grandeur exemplified in the paintings of Jiwa, Nanga, Shahji, Miya, Shiva etc. preserved in Palace Museum, Udaipur and the private museum of Kumar Sangram Singh.[7]

At Nathdwara, the installation of Shri Nathji gave rise to fresh dimensions in art. During the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the Mewar painting, imbibing the Brij and Mughal influences, continued to manifest its rise and fall through epic-painting, wall-painting and miniature painting.

Nathdwara Substyle

A distinct Mewar style of painting is termed Nathdwara substyle. To avoid the oppression of Aurangzeb, the image of Shri Nathji installed at Govardhan was brought to Rajasthan and installed at Nathdwara in 1670. Along with Acharya Gopi Nathji, many artists endowed with great religious fervour came here and created many beautiful paintings of Shri Nathji.[8] With the combination of the already established art of Mewar and artists of Nathdwara, the Nathdwara style of painting emerged. Many paintings concerning various *lilas* of Shri Nathji (Pl. 8) were created on paper or cloth, and they are still available in various national and international museums as well as many private collections.

Behind the figures of Shri Nathji, large screens of cloth are affixed to enhance their decorative aspect. These are known as *picchavais,* and they are the original contribution of the Nathdwara style. *Picchavais* are often created to symbolise any of these concerning festivals and *lilas* of Shri Nathji. Even today, the tradition of

Nathdwara continues. Depiction of natural scenery from the 18th century to this date is a distinct feature of the Nathdwara style.

The Nathdwara style continued to achieve artistic beauty. In the period of Tilkyat Goverdhan Lallji, painting of this style attained a pinnacle of glory. The main patrons of it were those thousands of pilgrims and devotees of Shri Nathji who continued to purchase paintings for the purpose of decoration.

In the 18th century, owing to the abundance of themes relating to the *lilas* of Krishna in painting, subjects like Mata Yasoda, Nandlal, cowherds were particularly painted. Because of the impact of Balkrishna a sense of maturity appeared in the figures of females, the physical profile and glimpses of sentiments of affection are particularly noticeable. Among male subjects physically stout Nandlal and other Balgopal figures call for special mention.

Cows, colts, boys, forest creepers are special components painted in the Nathdwara style. Because of the overall impact of folk art, simplicity of subjects, rhythm and combination of colours with distinct features had emerged in earlier paintings. About 200 years ago Shri Ram Chandra Baba, who came to Nathdwara from Jaipur, introduced new elements in sketching trees in paintings of that style. The artist Bhagwati had exhibited his skill in drawing minute details. The work of leading artists like Narayan, Chaturbhuj, Ramlinga, Udai Ram also deserves special reference.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, with the development of commercial art in the Nathdwara style, irregular colours and the growing impact of photography resulted in the systematic downgrading of the art of this region. But the tradition of painting in this style is still alive.

Devgarh Substyle

The Mewar school has been the chief and basic school of Rajasthani painting, and as such it has also influenced its nearby *Thikanas* in terms of drawing. The style of painting that developed there has imbibed not only its original culture, but it also remarkably manifests the stamp of natural environment, and the styles in vogue around. From this viewpoint the paintings of Devgarh, Sawar, and Shahpura Thikanas deserve a special note. These can be grouped under Mewar substyle.

Located near the Marwar border, Devgarh Thikana was established by Rawat Dwarkadas Chudawat in 1680 during the reign of Maharana Jaisingh (1680-1698). Despite its adherence to the Mewar painting tradition, the Devgarh painting-style displays naturally the impact of Marwar. In 1728, the princess of Devgarh was married to Maharana Madho Singh of Jaipur, and as such due to matrimonial, blood and cultural relations; and also owing to the assimilation of the traits of Mewar, Marwar and Jaipur art, the paintings prepared by the painters of this region have their own individual identity. This style has acquired distinctiveness on account of the use of thick and well-balanced lines, abundance of green and yellow colours unlike Mewar, the folk painting of Marwar-like figures of men and women, natural desert landscape, hunting, community feast (goth), harems, royal grandeur, adornment, and carriages etc. On this basis it can be placed under Mewar substyle.

Devgarh paintings are preserved in various museums and private collections, chief among which are National Museum, New Delhi, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur, Kawasji, Shri Suhali, Boman Behran, Bombay etc. Besides, important Devgarh material is available at the personal collection of Rawal Nahar Singh of Devgarh. The wall-paintings at *Kapardwar* of Devgarh, *Ajara Ki Ovari, Moti Mahal,* give us an idea of the tradition of painting here.

Among the Devgarh painters, Bagata (1769-1820) and Kanwala I (1775-1810) were two distinguished artists. Kanwala II (1800-1850), Chaukha and Baij Nath (1770-1830) following in the footsteps of their above illustrious predecessors, enriched the Devgarh substyle by their valuable contribution. Dr Shridhar Andhare highlighted this style for the first time.[9]

Salient Features

Mewar painting possesses unique features which greatly influenced the different styles of Rajasthani painting.[10] A synthesis of Jain and Gujarati styles is evident in the earliest Mewar painting (Pl. 3). Besides the simplicity of folk art, the irregularity of line was a unique characteristic. But from the middle of the 17th century the independent growth of this style became famous for its own inherent qualities.

Stout masculine figures, faces covered with mustaches, wide eyes, open lips, small neck, long turban, waist tied with *dupatta* and body decorated with general ornaments are some distinctive features of the Mewar style. Paintings of females depict eyes resembling those of a fish, a straight long nose, double chins, short stature, body covered with *ghagara-luggri* and *kanchuki* and Rajasthani ornaments.

Careful drawing of nature is visible in the Mewar school (Pl. 6). Among birds, *chakor, hans*, peacock, and among animals horse, elephant, deer, lion were frequently painted. The impact of the Malwa school is visible in the paintings of nature. In Mewar paintings, where colours maintain their own simplicity, most paintings have been drawn upon red, yellow (Pl. 5) and green surfaces. An artistic display of folk colours is a unique tradition of Mewar paintings.

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2. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Indian Art Gallery.
3. Muni Punyavijaya, *Supasnah Chariyam Nee Hastlikhit Pothi Maan Chitra;* Acharya Shri Vijayavallabha Suri, *Smarak Granth,* p. 156, available in Jain Granth Bhandar, Jaisalmer.
4. State Museum, Udaipur.
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7. For a detailed study see Radhakrishna, *Mewar ki Chitrankan Parampara.*
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9. Shridhar Andhare, *Folios of Devgarh Painting.*
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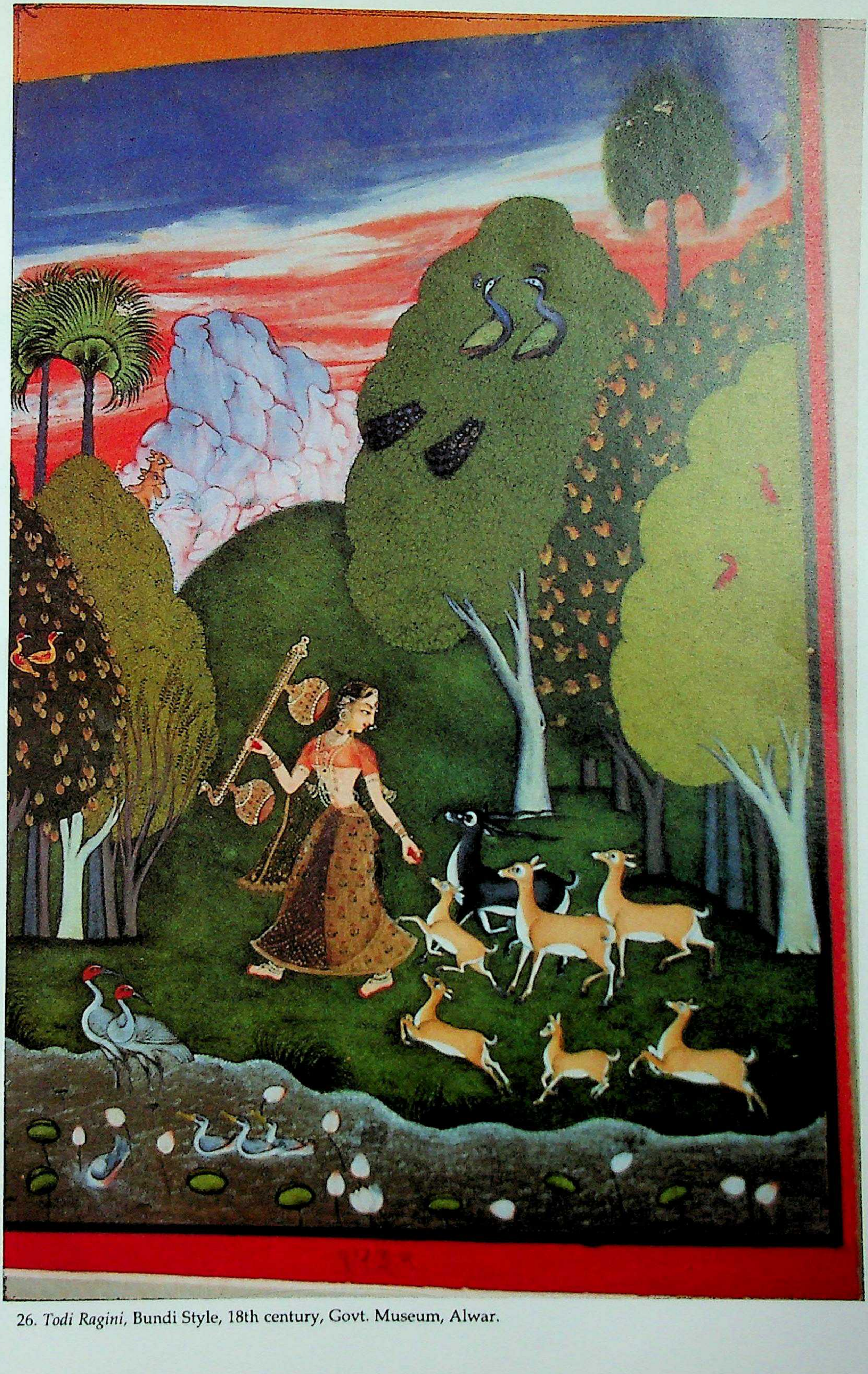
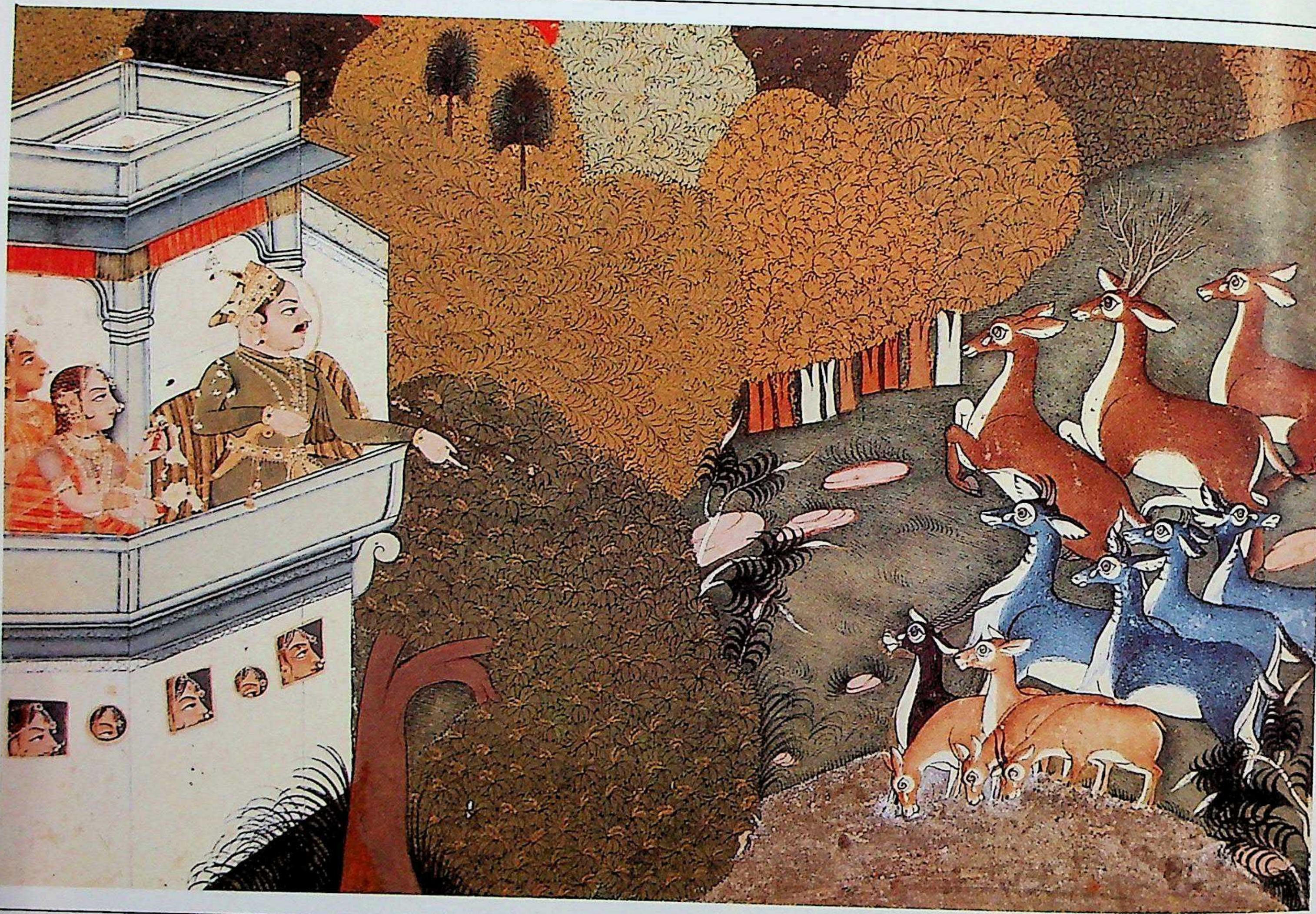
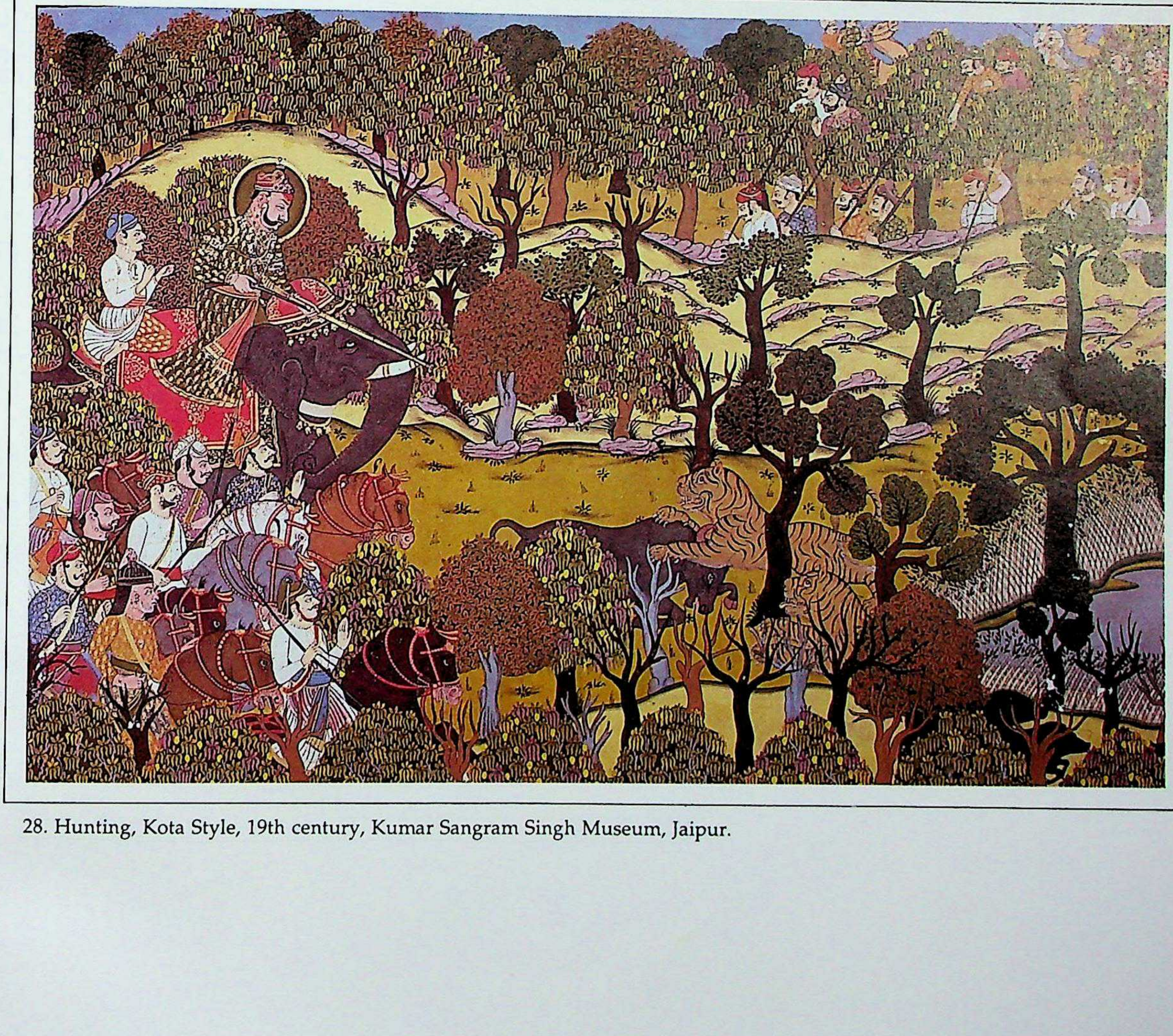


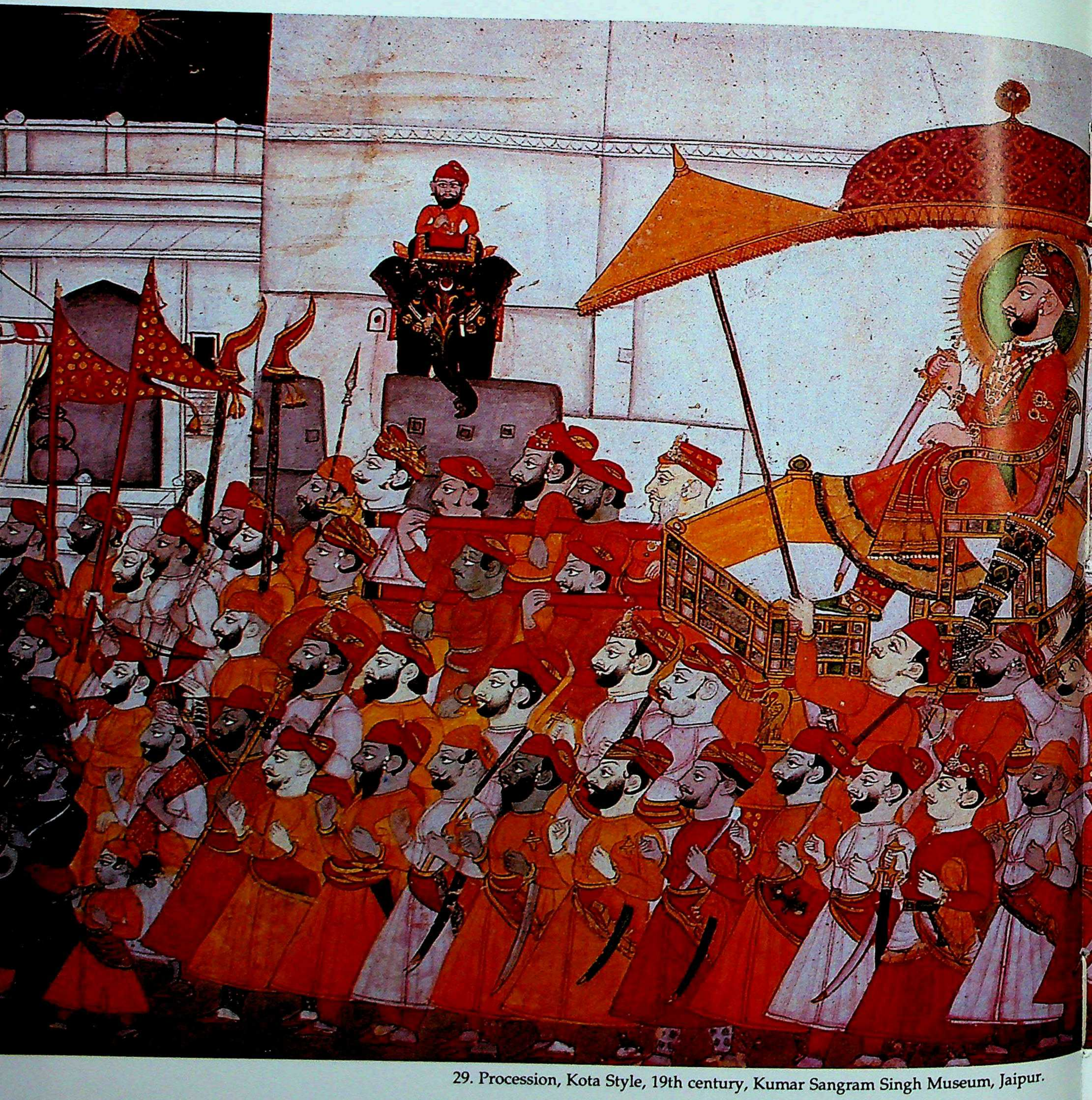
26. *Todi Ragini*, Bundi Style, 18th century, Govt. Museum, Alwar.



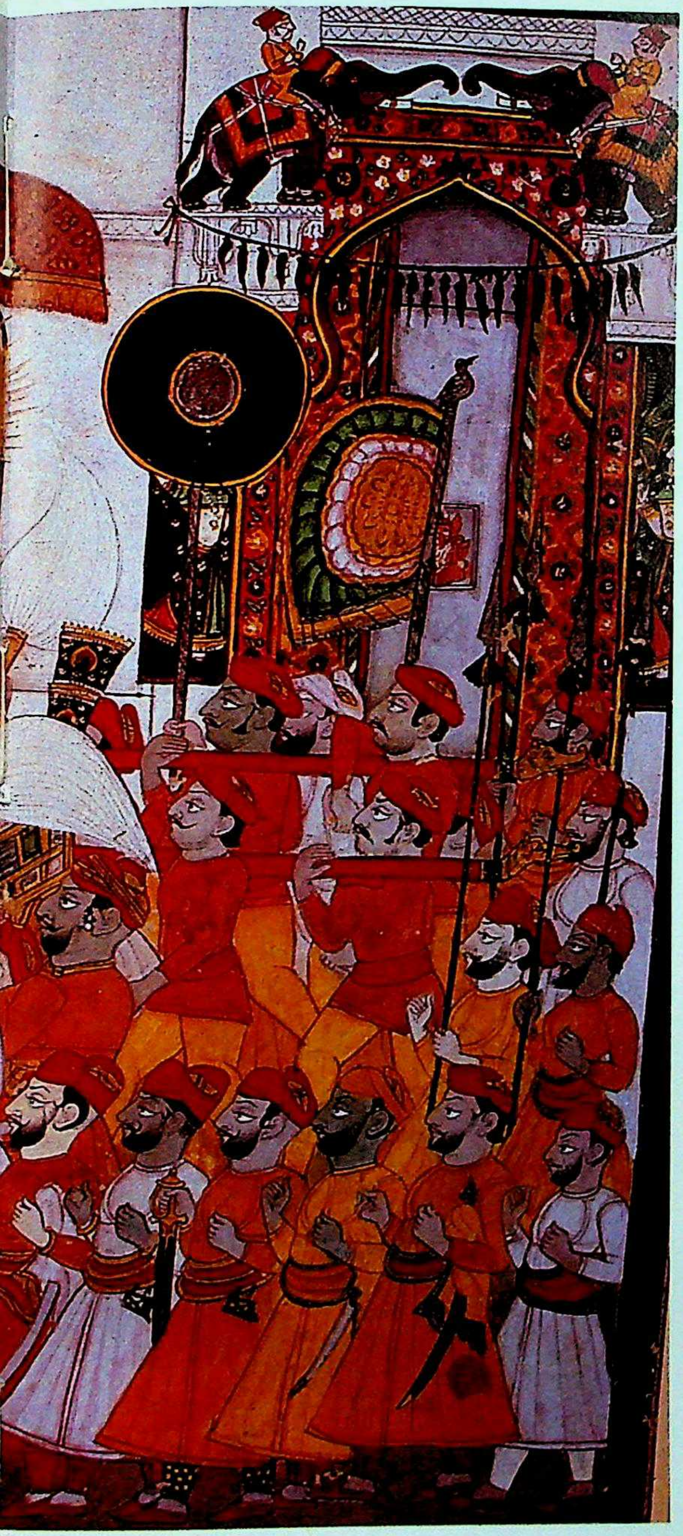
27. Watching the game, Kota Style, later 18th century, Govt. Museum, Alwar.

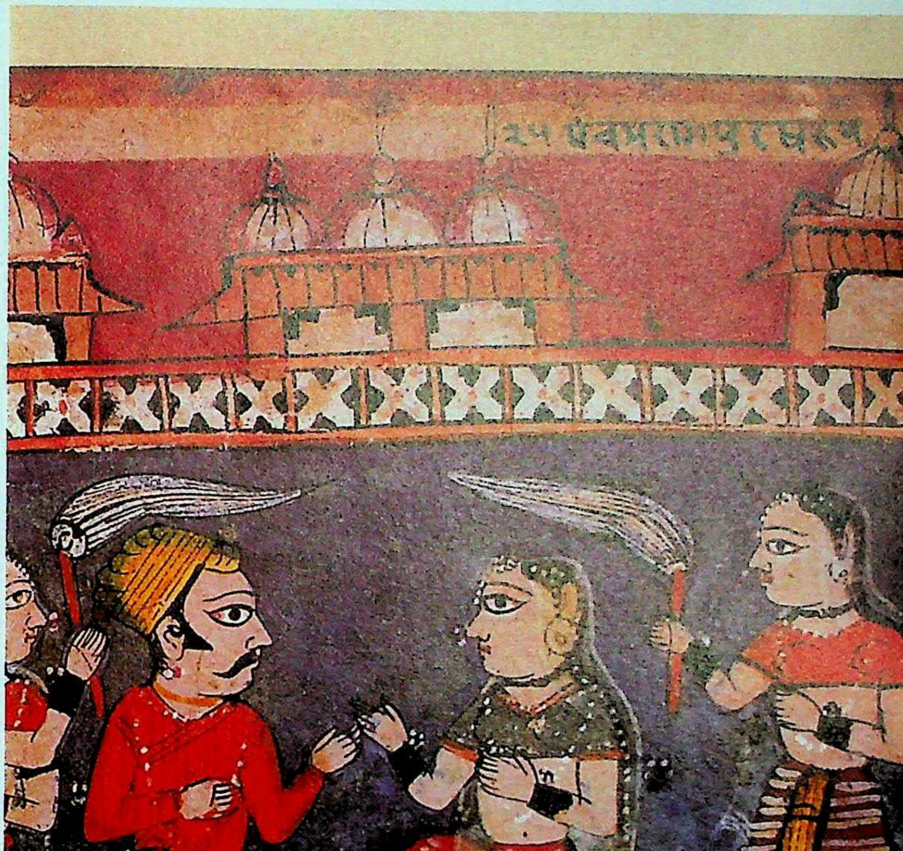


28. Hunting, Kota Style, 19th century, Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

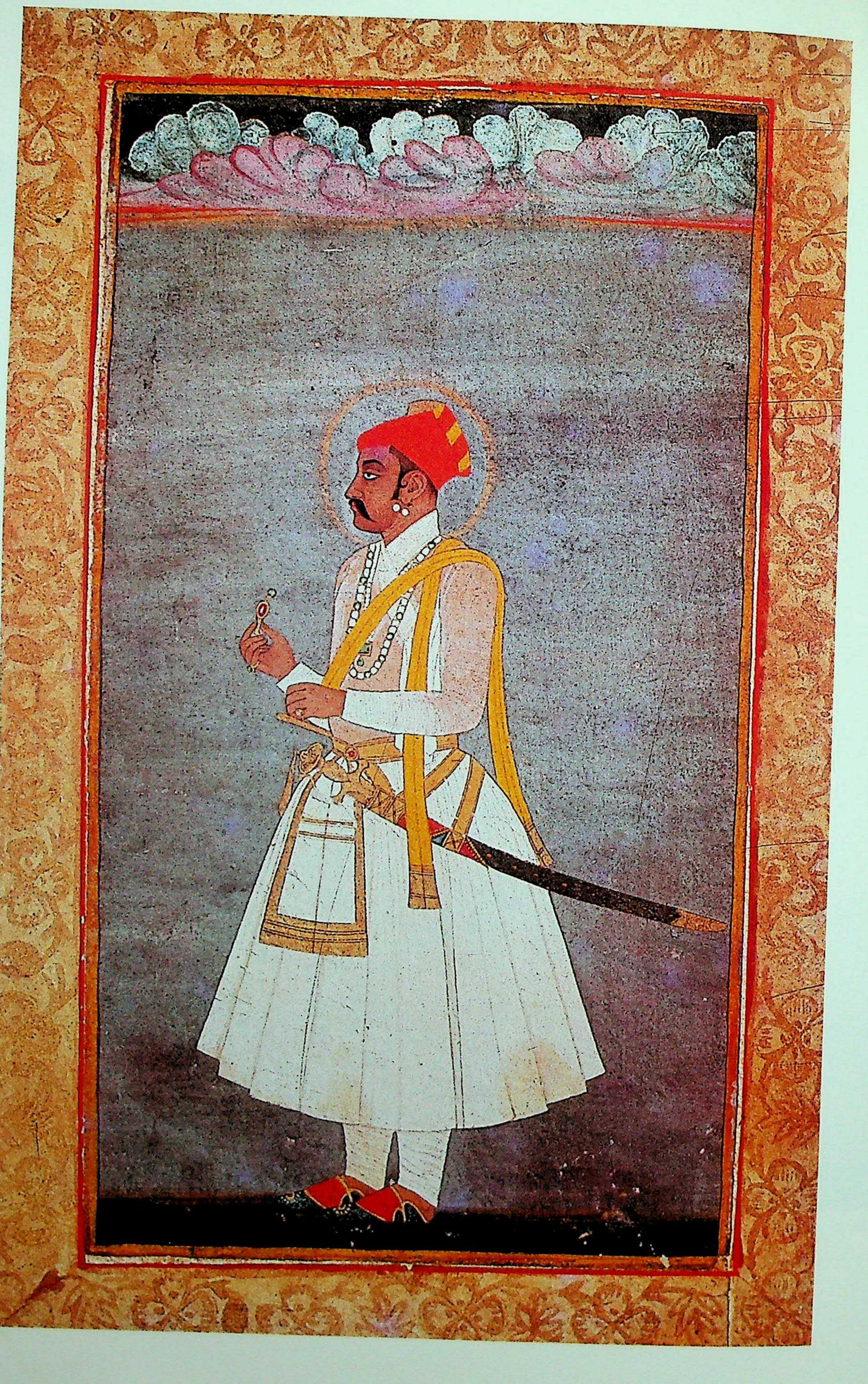


29. Procession, Kota Style, 19th century, Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

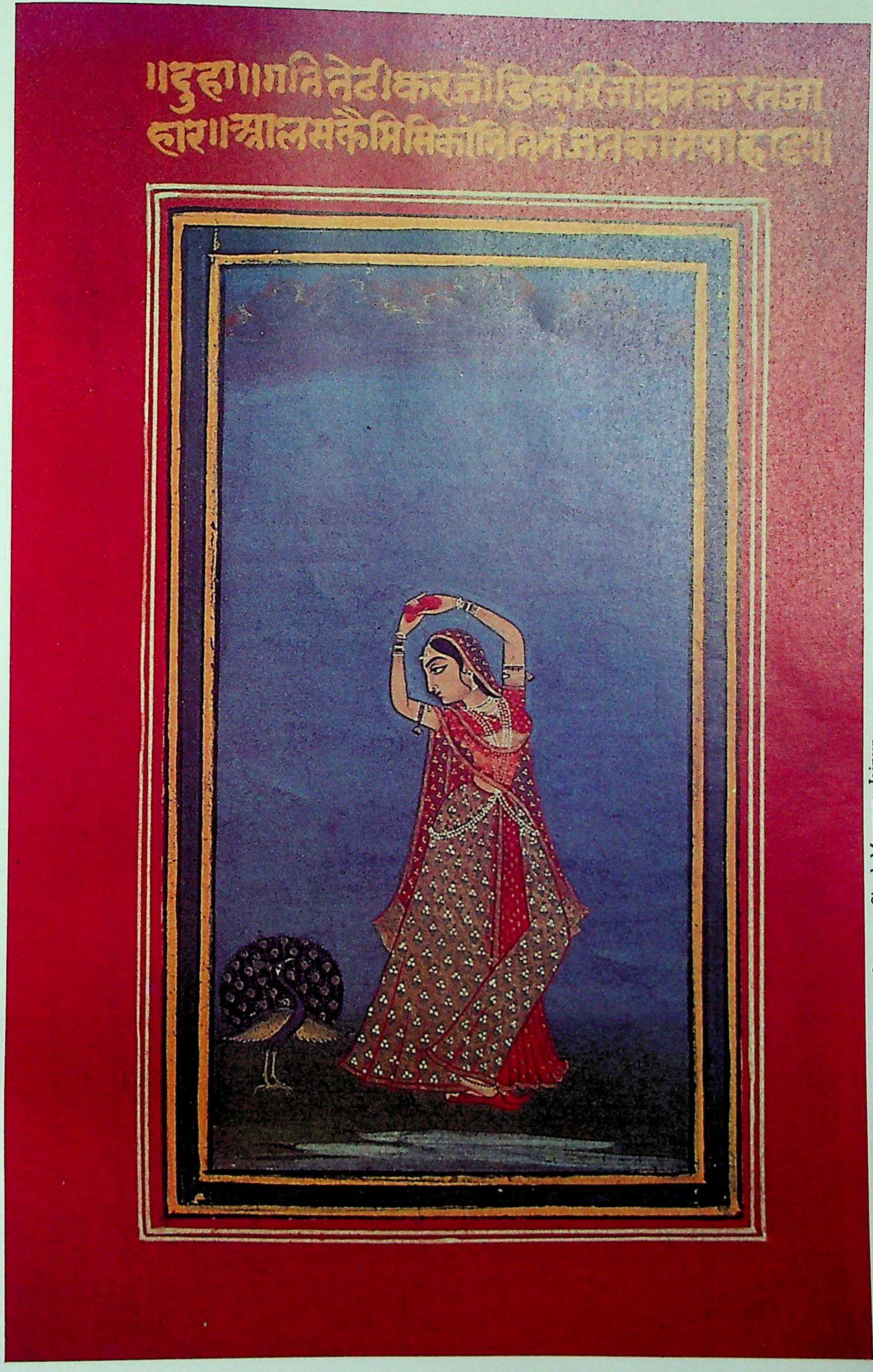




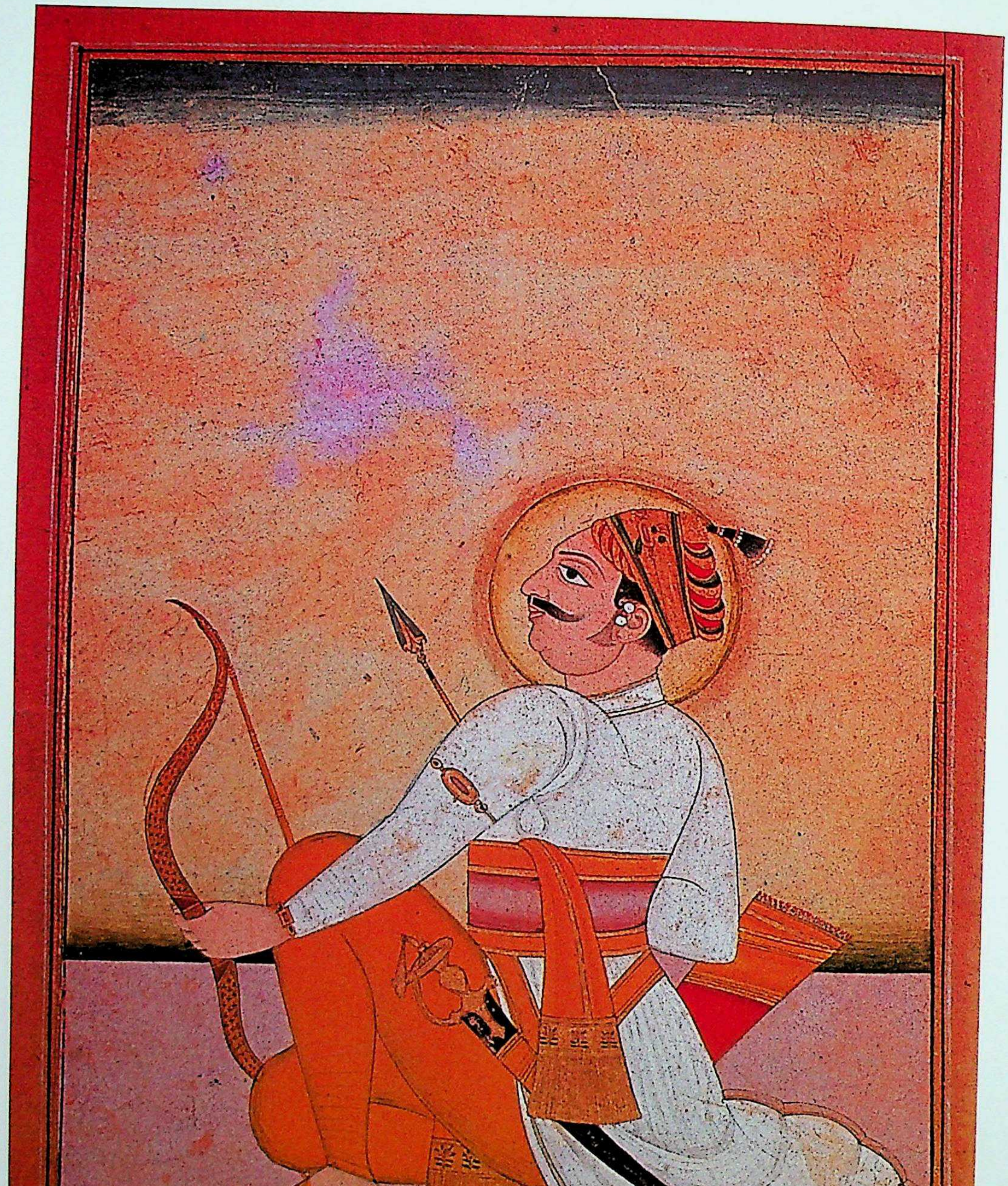
30. *Pancham Rag*, Amber Style, 1650 A.D. Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.



31. Mirja Raja Jai Singh, Jaipur Style, 18th century, Govt. Museum, Alwar (now in Hawah Mahal Museum, Jaipur).



32. *Bihari Satsai*, Jaipur Style, 18th century, Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.



33. Prithviraj Chauhan, Jaipur Style, 18th century, Govt. Museum, Alwar.

CHAPTER III

MARWAR SCHOOL

After the Mewar school, the grandeur of the Marwar school of painting is well expressed in the Jodhpur style, the Bikaner style and the world-famed Kishangarh style as well as in the substyles of Jaisalmer, Naugore, Ghanerao, Sirohi, Ajmer. The Kishangarh style has a unique character, but being in a state of Rathores painting there should be linked with the traditions of Jodhpur.

Like Mewar, Maru Pradesh followed the traditions of Ajanta. Its preliminary form may be seen from the artistic shape of the gate of Mandore.[1] This region attained fame in the domain of art and culture under the rule of the Gurjara-Pratiharas.

Tara Nath, a Tibetan pilgrim, referred to Sridhar as an artist of the 7th century in Maru Pradesh.[2] This confirms that the Marwar school of painting had its own earlier traditions. In ancient times, this territory was a part of Gujarat state, and that is why the paintings of western Rajasthan cannot be dissociated from the developed form of the Gujarat, Jain, Apbhransh and other styles. It is assumed that many pictorial Jain and Apbhransh texts were executed in Maru Pradesh.[3] In reality, Rajasthan painting emerged from the Jain and Apbhransh styles. Western Rajasthan remained the centre of these styles.

Rashtrakoot Rajputs established their rule in ancient Maru Pradesh. The art of painting developed in Jodhpur under Jodha of the Rathore dynasty, in Bikaner under Bikaji, in Kishangarh under Kishan Singhji. In the neighbouring states it was known as the Marwari school of painting, which flourished in many styles and substyles.

Jodhpur Style

After establishing his kingdom, Jodhaji contributed impressively to the prosperity and enrichment of Indian culture in this new field. The Jain, Gujarat and Apbhransh styles were revived in new form. Credit goes to Maldeo (1532-68) for giving renewed vigour to the cultural traditions and artistic perspectives of Marwar. Before him, the Marwar style maintained its complete mastery over the Jodhpur style, but Maldeo carved out an independent Marwar and devoted himself to the growth of the arts. From the point of view of primitive art, the *Uttaradhyayan Sutra* of his time, now preserved in Baroda Museum, occupies a prominent place. Glimpses of paintings of that age may also be visualised in the frescoes of Chaukhela Palace.

Many paintings of the early 17th century belong to the Jodhpur style, and even though highly influenced by the Mewari style possess their original character. Many paintings of the time of Raja Shur Singh (1595-1620) are preserved in the art and picture gallery of Baroda and in the private collection of Sangram Singh. Shur Singh was an art lover. *Dhola-Maru* is among the artistic historical pictorial texts compiled during his period and the Bhagwad of Pustak Prakash, Jodhpur, painted in 1610, is endowed with many special local features.

Rag-Mala, an illustrated text painted in 1623 and preserved in the private collection of Sangram Singh (Pl. 11), is a compilation of great historical value painted for the famous Vitthal Dass of Pali. These paintings are considerably influenced by the art of Marwar.

Some miniatures based on verses of Sursagar in the middle of the 17th century in the Jodhpur style are preserved in Baroda Museum and in the collection of Sangram Singh. They express poetic sentiments elegantly. *Rasikpriya*, also available in Baroda Museum, was painted in the same period. Its sharpness of colour combination and abundance of ornament deserve special mention.[5]

Another phase of Jodhpur art started in the reign of Maharaja Jaswant Singh, a man of high intellectual qualities and a keen lover of art. In his reign, Marwar became an important centre of the Krishna-Bhakti cult, which became the subject of many paintings.. Jaswant Singh was the commander-in-chief of Aurangzeb, hence the impact of Mughal art was inevitable.

The impact of the Mughal school in its original form has been noted in the Jodhpur style paintings of this period. They are very simple, and the sharp outlines, the expression of sentiments and colour combination in these paintings are notable. Because of the spread of the Krishna-Bhakti cult, the effect of folk art on the Jodhpur school calls for study. Traditions of folk painting were a common feature of the Jodhpur style.

Because of the great valour and courage of Durga Dass, the reign of Ajit Singh was a landmark in the annals of the development of Rajasthani art. Paintings of that age had themes like Rasikpriya, Geet-Govind, poetical texts and aspects of the royal court, hunting, festivals, processions, pictures of kings and feudal lords. Royal patronage in the reigns of Abhaya Singh and Ram Singh to artists in the Jodhpur style was generous.

In the 19th century, the Nath sect dominated the life of Marwar. In 1803, the last phase of the Jodhpur style opened in the reign of Maharaja Man Singh. Ayasji Deo Nath was the spiritual guide of Man Singh,[6] and painting flourished in many monasteries. Sixty-three paintings of this period based on the *Ras-Raj* of Mati Ram were recovered from a monastery belonging to the Nath sect and are preserved in the private collections of Ram Gopal Vijayavargia and Sangram Singh and in the State Museum, Jaipur.

Though in this period many paintings in the Jodhpur style were produced they were not of high artistic quality. In towns like Kuchman, Naugore, Pali, Jalore, feudal lords also encouraged painting after building galleries.

In the middle of the 19th century, with the advent of photography, the Jodhpur style, like other styles of painting, started deteriorating.

Salient Features

The Jodhpur style is the principal style of the Marwar school, but even today a large number of paintings in this style are not available, and whatever is available belongs to the early part of the 19th century. Despite being influenced by the Mewar school, the Jodhpur style has its own striking features, and as a result its separate constitution comes to light.

Males in this style are stoutly built and tall. Their curved mustaches, touching their throats, raised turbans and dress decorated with royal splendour are very impressive. The limbs of females are shapely and plump.

Besides local influences, the impact of the Mughal style also deserves special consideration. Application of folk art, combinations of red and yellow, depiction of feudal splendourand of simple life are also highlights of this style. Where drawings of palaces and palatial buildings were made extensively, in respect of scenery, paintings were created to suit the tastes of the capitalists of Marwar.

Principal artists of this style whose names have been identified include Virji (1623), Narayan Dass (1700), Bhatti Amar Dass (1750), Chhajju Bhatti, Kishen Dass (1800), Danna (1810), Bhatti Shiv Dass, Dev Dass, Jit Mal (1825), Kalu Ram (1831). The Jodhpur style is the principal style of the Marwar school and requires a great deal of research work.

Bikaner Style

In distant Maru Pradesh, the state of Bikaner was founded by Rao Bikaji of the Rathore dynasty in 1488. Being an integral part of Marwar and belonging to the same dynasty of Jodhpur, the artistic heritage of Bikaner is recognised as a significant link in the traditions of the Marwar school. Although influenced by many external forces, Bikaner maintains its original form intact. According to the artistic and other styles of Rajasthan, painting in Bikaner commenced its development from the end of the 16th century.

Early paintings in the Bikaner style may be traced to the pictorial Bhagwad Puran painted in the time of Rai Singh (1571-1591).[8] He himself compiled the Rai Singh Mahotsav and Jyotish Ratnak texts.[9] The impact of the Jain school is easily discernible in the early paintings of Bikaner. Matheran was a Jain monk who started painting Jain religious texts and exhibited the impact of the Jain school in the original Bikaner style.

The Mughal paintings of this region distinctly depict this mutual influence. Maharana Rai Singh had married Jasmade, daughter of Maharana Udai Singh (1537-1572).[10] His second marriage took place in Jaisalmer in 1592, hence Bhagwad Puran (1599 approx.) in Bikaner style, *Madhavanal Kamkalanda* (1603) compiled and painted for Kunhar Raj of Jaisalmer, and *Chor Panchashika* (1540) compiled by Bilhan in the Mewar style and Rag-Mala (1605) painted by Nasir Di exhibit great similarity from the angles of techniques and selection of colours.

Kalyan Mal, Raja of Bikaner, established relations with the Mughals after marrying his daughter to Emperor Akbar. The rulers of Bikaner occupied prominent positions in Mughal courts.[11] Maharana Rai Singh, who held the exalted position of governor of Burhanpur in the south from 1604 to 1611, made a good collection of artifacts. In this regard the illustrated texts of Rag-Mala are very significant.

Hence the emergence of the Bikaner style appears to date back to the later part of the 16th century. The second phase of the Bikaner style began in the period of Anup Singh (1669-1698), but the middle link of this style was no less significant. Because of the non-availability of paintings nothing definite can be said about this period. In the reigns of Jehangir and Shahjahan very cordial relations were maintained with the Bikaner royal house.

Because of this fact mutual exchanges of art and artists frequently took place. The oldest specimen of the Bikaner style is a painting by Noor Mohammad, son of Saha Mohammad, in 1606.[12] A large number of such paintings are preserved in museums and private collections, and a systematic study of paintings of that age could be undertaken with their help.

In the reign of Shahjahan the number of artists greatly increased and many migrated to other places to receive royal patronage. Because of the indifferent attitude of Emperor Aurangzeb to artistic activities, artists sought patronage in the princely states of Rajasthan. The renowned Usta family of Bikaner, which was concentrated in Lahore in the Mughal period, joined the courts of Maharajas Karni Singh and Anup Singh at Bikaner in the reign of Aurangzeb. In paintings in the Bikaner style, the name of the artist along with that of his father and *sanvant* are engraved. Usta Asir Khan came to Bikaner from Delhi in the time of Karni Singh (1650) and developed a high sense of artistry.

Maharaja Anup Singh was a man of great literary taste and artistic temperament, hence he had a high regard for artists from Delhi and Lahore.[13] These artists had been specialists in the Mughal style, but after going to Bikaner they had executed many paintings based upon Hindu legends, and Sanskrit, Rajasthani and Hindi poems as fitted the taste of their master. These have been recognised as fine specimens of the Bikaner style after the adoption of Rajput culture.

Dr Raghuvir Singh observes that a new synthetic Indian culture emerged in the reigns of the Great Mughals and these diverse influences had again begun to mingle and flourish in the royal courts.[14] In the period of Maharaja Anup Singh this development attained its unique character.

His courtier Mussabir Ruknuddeen played a significant role in this process. He executed hundreds of paintings such as those entitled *Keshav's Rasikpriya* and *Barah-masa*. His whole family accepted fully the Bikaner style of painting. His son Sahabudin executed many paintings on themes of the Bhagwad Puran and his grandson Kayam painted in the Bikaner style at the beginning of the 18th century.

In the time of Anup Singh, Munna Lall, Mukund, Chandu Lall and others belonging to the Matheran family also made their special contribution to the development of the Bikaner style. Artists from the Matheran and Usta families elevated the Bikaner style to its climax of glory in the reign of Anup Singh, whose pictorial texts and miniatures are preserved in the National Museum, the Baroda Museum and the private collection of Maharaja Karni Singh.

In the 18th century the Bikaner style witnessed its third phase. With the steady downfall of the Mughals, the Bikaner style had freed itself from the impact of the Mughal style, and because of matrimonial alliances the Bikaner style was greatly influenced by the styles of Jaipur, Bundi, Mewar and Pahari besides others. The impact of the Kishangarh style upon paintings of this period is quite discernible. In this period painters created an absolute Rajasthani style.

Artists of the Matheran family however continued to maintain their traditions. They had drafted copies of the Jain texts, and compiled such texts on festive occasions. They drew personal pictures of kings to be presented to them. Many paintings engraved with the names of artists like Munna Lall, Mukund (1668), Ram Kishan (1770), Jai Kishan Matheran, Chandu Lall (1678) along with *sanvants* may be viewed even today.[15]

Leading artists of the Usta family of that period include Kayam, Kasim, Abu Hamid, Shah Mohammad, Ahmad Al Sahabudin, Jivan who had brilliantly depicted *Rasikpriya, Barah-masa*, Rag-ragini (Pl. 18), *Krishna Lila*, hunting, *mehafil* and royal splendour (Pl. 19).

The Bikaner style further accelerated the process of developing frescoes in the Rajasthani tradition, palaces of Bikaner fort and many cenotaphs.

In Bikaner, superb paintings were drawn on wooden boards showing Radha-Krishna as in the wooden doors of the National Museum.[16] Drawings on the hides of camels are a unique feature of the Bikaner style.

Salient Features

Because of Bikaner state's close ties with the Mughal court all salient characteristics of the Mughal style are quite visible in early paintings of the Bikaner style. Many critics therefore term it a provincial Mughal style. But drawings of slim and attractive females with eyes resembling those of deer, the frequent application of blue, green and red colours, turbans of the style of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb along with the high *pagaris* (Pl. 17) of Marwari fashion, camels, deer and the Bikaneri style of living and the impact of Rajput culture (Pl. 19) make us believe it is a distinct style.

Rulers of Bikaner often served as governors of the Mughals on the southern frontier, hence the impact of the southern style on Bikaner art is considerable. Tall and slim maidens, minute drawings of cypress and coconut trees, fountains playing and application of green colours are especially worth seeing. From the southern fronts, Rajput soldiers and artists used to return via Vijayanagar, Golconda, Ahmednagar, Malwa, hence the influence of the art of that region had its impact on local art.

In the Bikaner style, abrupt linings, delicate drawings and minute lines had particularly been drawn. Arrangement of linings was very impressive. In place of bright colours soft ones were applied. Application of red, violet, white, brown and blue had frequently been made in this style. Ornaments of beads too were frequently marked.

The manner of dressing was a synthesis of Mughal and Rajput styles. As the Kishangarh style women are drawn tall, with eyes resembling those of *khanjan* birds and tight blouses and lambs, goats, camels, dogs and desert landscapes drawn in the Bikaner style in the 18th century. In later styles, drawings of fringed clouds are worth seeing in the frescoes of Chandra Mahal, Lall Niwas and Sardar Mahal. Drawings of sand dunes influenced by Persian and Chinese art, mountains and foliage deserve special mention.

The Matheran and Usta families had developed the Bikaner style. Even today their descendants produce paintings on auspicious occasions such as marriages. A last ray of light of the Usta family, Hissamudin, had been internationally acclaimed for his drawings on the hides of camels.

Kishangarh Style

The Kishangarh style of painting occupies a significant position in relation to Rajasthani painting. A style of painting which flourished in the royal court of an erstwhile tiny state located near Ajmer is famous. Credit for making it known goes to Eric Dickinson and Dr Fayaz Ali.[17]

Kishangarh state was founded by the eighth son of Raja Udai Singh of the Rathore dynasty of Jodhpur state in 1609. Raja Kishan Singh was accorded the status of a commander leading a thousand infantrymen and 500 cavalry by Emperor Jehangir. Closely connected with Jodhpur state and the Mughal court, the rulers of that state were conversant with the royal culture and sophisticated way of living. In the developed state of the Marwar school the Kishangarh style had acquired its unique and glorious position in the realm of Rajasthani painting after having ascended to the pinnacle of glory in the time of Savant Singh.

Raja Roop Singh, fifth in lineage (1648-1658), made Roop Nagar his capital to avoid some strategic difficulties which had existed under the rule of Savant Singh. Roop Singh was a man of outstanding intellect endowed with a kindly heart. Like his forefathers, he had been initiated into the Vallabha sect and adopted the cult of Krishna as a way of life and means of salvation. Contemporary artists had started painting various modes of the Radha-Krishna tradition to convert these myths into reality to keep their master pleased.[18]

After Roop Singh came Raja Man Singh (1658-1706), himself a distinguished poet as well as patron of the poets and art. He was guided by the famous poet Brind in the art of poetry. A devotee of the Vaishnav sect, he was keenly interested in subjects pertaining to the Bhakti cult. He was also an artist in his own right. Some paintings belonging to his time are preserved in the Kapad Bhandar of Kishangarh.[19]

In the growth of painting in this region his son Raj Singh (1706-1748) also played a major role. Raj Singh was an extraordinarily brave person endowed with a strictly religious temperament as well as artistic bent of mind. He himself compiled 33 texts which greatly influenced artists of that age.[20] From this time the king-designate, Raja Savant Singh, was much influenced by his father's dedication to art. His education and religious initiation had been performed as his father desired to live in an artistic environment. He was at home as much in Sanskrit as in music. He also took a keen interest in painting. Four paintings in the private collection of the Kishangarh royal family bear testimony to this.

Savant Singh had cultivated a great taste for poetry early in life. From 1723 to 1731 he contributed significantly to expanding the volume of poetry dedicated to Krishna-Bhakti after compiling *Manorath Manjari, Rasik Ratnavali, Bihari Chandrika.*[21] Like their forefathers they had been initiated in the Vallabha sect by their spiritual master Ran Chhor Dass.

In the style of painting created in the middle of the 18th century new trends are visualised. The pleasant temperament of Radha-Krishna is depicted in the new form. To provide fine shapes to this style, credit goes to the royal courtier-cum-artist Mordhavaj Nihal Chand. Hundreds of paintings by him remain as an invaluable heritage. The grandfather of Nihal Chand, Surdhavaj Mool Raj, came from Delhi to serve as Raja Man Singh's *diwan.*

Later artists of his generation contributed to the growth of the Kishangarh style. Nihal Chand illustrated the brush poetry of Nagri Dass from 1735 to 1738.[22] After Nagri Dass's *Vrindavanbass,* drawings of Mussavir Nihal Chand continued to appear in the state, but in these later drawings his magic touch was missing.

The painting of this age is often associated with the love life of Vanithani and Nagri Dass, but this is not historically true. The former ruler of Kishangarh denied this view and stated: "Vanithani was a state singer whose status in the royal family resembled that of a mother for her sister. But it was a different matter that Vanithani had herself been a singer and poetess. Paintings of that time might have been influenced by her impact."[23]

Ancestors of Diwan Surdhavaj Mool Raj significantly contributed to the growth of Kishangarh art, Sita Ram and Badan Singh stand eminent among them. Drawings of Amroo and Suraj Mal are ascribed to the period of Nagri Dass. The artist Nanak Ram also created many paintings in the time of the brother of Nagri Dass. Artistic workmanship performed by Ram Nath and Joshi Swami Ram, ancestors of Nanak Ram, in the period of Raja Birad Singh (1782-1788) was greatly admired. In the regime of Raja Kalyan Singh (1798-1838) an artist named Ladli Dass played a very striking role in the development of the Kishangarh style. A renowned painting titled *Geet-Govind* was also created in the same period.

By and by the eternal quality of the Kishangarh style began to lose its distinct character. Its deterioration began to be visible in paintings in the reign of Prithvi Singh (1840-1880). After this period, the Kishangarh style was lost in oblivion.

Salient Features

The Kishangarh style possesses some distinct features which maintain its unique identity. Drawings of limbs of males and females, colourful paintings of nature, arrangement of colours, illustrations of themes connected with the Radha-Krishna cult (Pl. 21) are some distinct features of this style.

Male figures are tall, of attractive physique with blue aura-like bunch as of hair, elevated turbans, with strings of pearls in white or blue, symmetrically developed forehead, thin lips and wide and attractive eyes stretched to the ears like *khanjan* birds are some unique features of the Kishangarh style. On the whole the eyes occupy such an important position that the viewer is first drawn to that spot. Pointed chin, long neck resembling a *surahi* of water, strong arms, round and tender fingers, transparent gowns draped down to the feet, and the whole body covered with ornaments and flowers are very distinct in the Kishangarh style.

Female figures are fair in complexion, and their wide eyes are adorned with *kajal.*

Semi-developed but firm breasts, body covered with *lehnga, odhni* and *kanchuki* and decorated with flowers and ornaments are salient features and half-blossomed buds of lotus in the hands exhibit the charm and beauty of the nayika-like Radha.

The natural perspective of Kishangarh and Roopangarh was endowed with lakes, mountains, gardens, various birds, and accordingly drawings of nature showed frequently large lakes spread far and wide, swans sporting in them, ducks, *jalmugabi*, cranes, *bagula*, heron and boats afloat and at anchor. Krishna engaged in romantic affairs in boats. Large buildings, white parapets covered with creepers, fountains and ponds covered with flowering lotus together make the Kishangarh style charming. Similar drawings were created in the Bundi style too, showing the love play of Radha-Krishna in the full moonlight, drawings of morning and evening clouds in crimson.

The Kishangarh style has its own combination of colours. To express tender sentiments of Radha-Krishna artists often used light colours. The principal colours were white, rose, cream and deep red. Margins are drawn in rose and green.

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CHAPTER IV

HADOTI SCHOOL

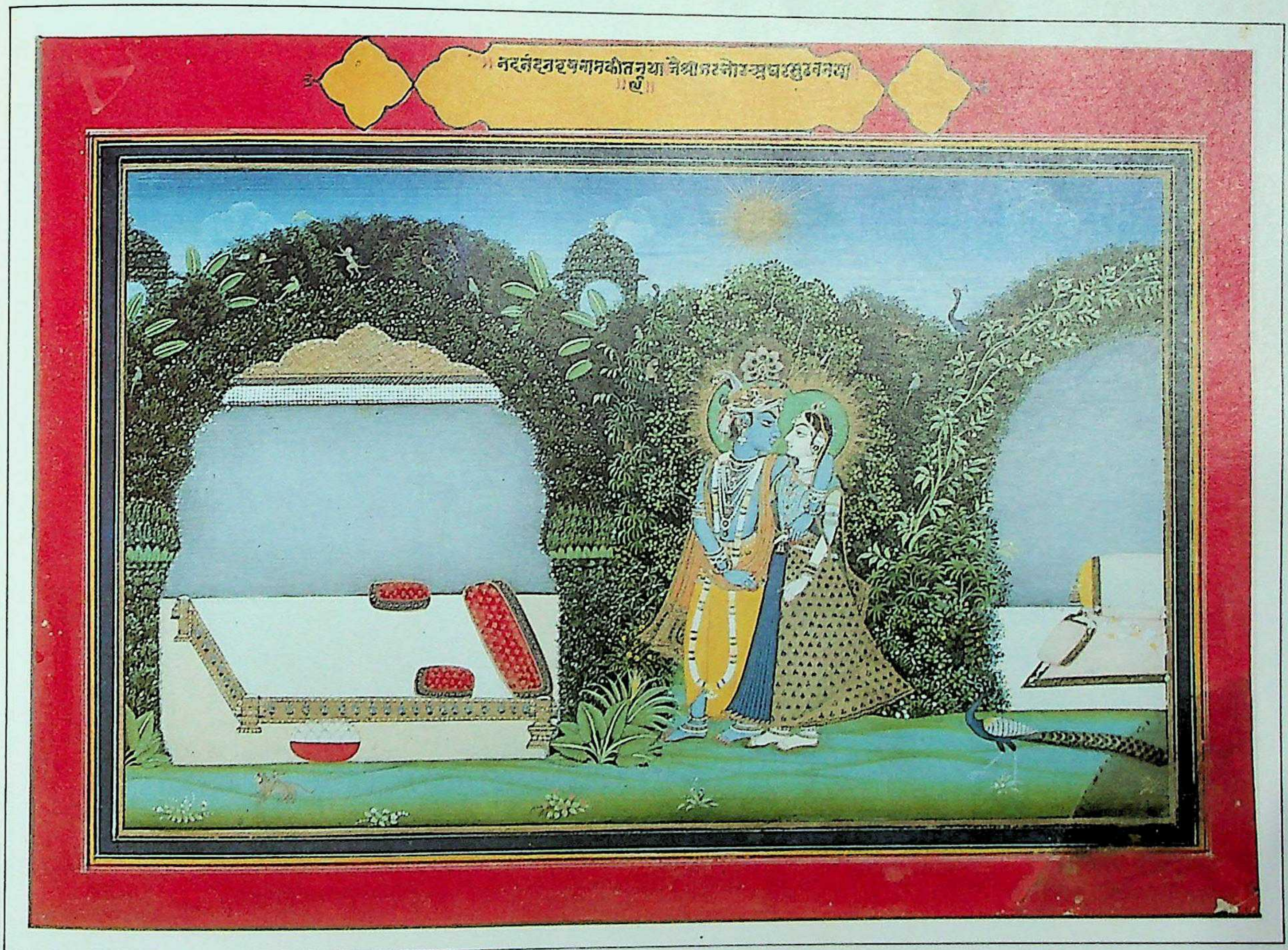
The role and influence of the rulers of the Chauhan dynasty were confined to the regions of Bundi, Kota and Jhalawar. Hence this area has been termed the Hadoti region. This area was a treasury of art. The oldest specimens of prehistoric rock paintings in Rajasthan are in the caves on the banks of the Chambal river near Kota. Its temple architecture and iconography were famous from ancient times. Many artistic temples located at Kansua, Badoli and Ramgarh testify to this fact.

Bundi Style

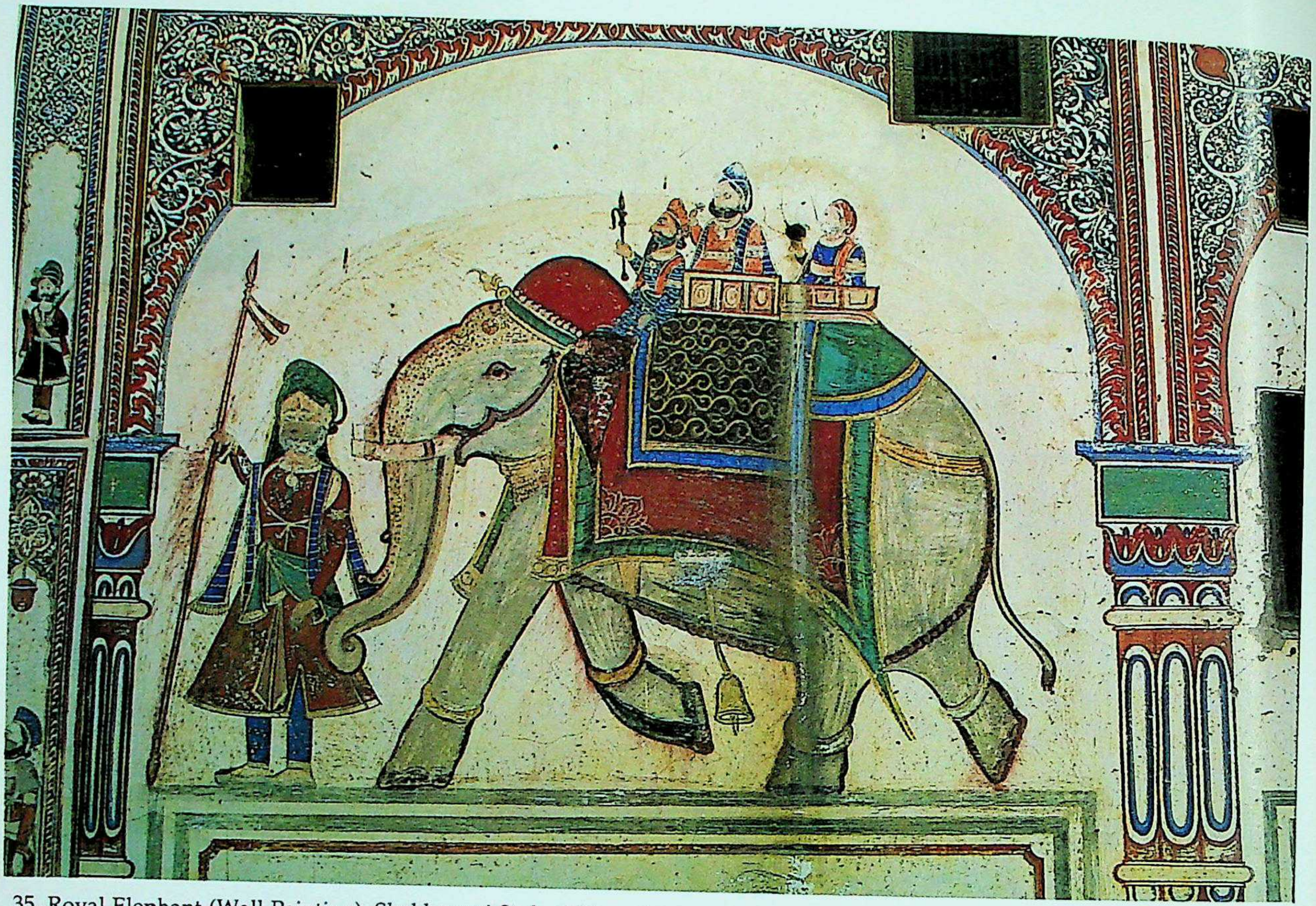
The style of painting that flourished when Bundi was ruled by Hada Rajputs is widely known as the Bundi style. The natural beauty of this place comprising mountains covered with luxuriant vegetation, lakes, streams and dense forests greatly influenced artists.

Historical Background

Till the middle of the 14th century A.D. (Sanvant 1398), Bundi, founded by Rao Deva, was a leading Rajput state, but Bundi painting dated back to the time of Raja Surjan Singh (1594-1598). Having severed his relations with Mewar, he surrendered the fort of Ranthambor to Emperor Akbar and accepted the suzerainty of

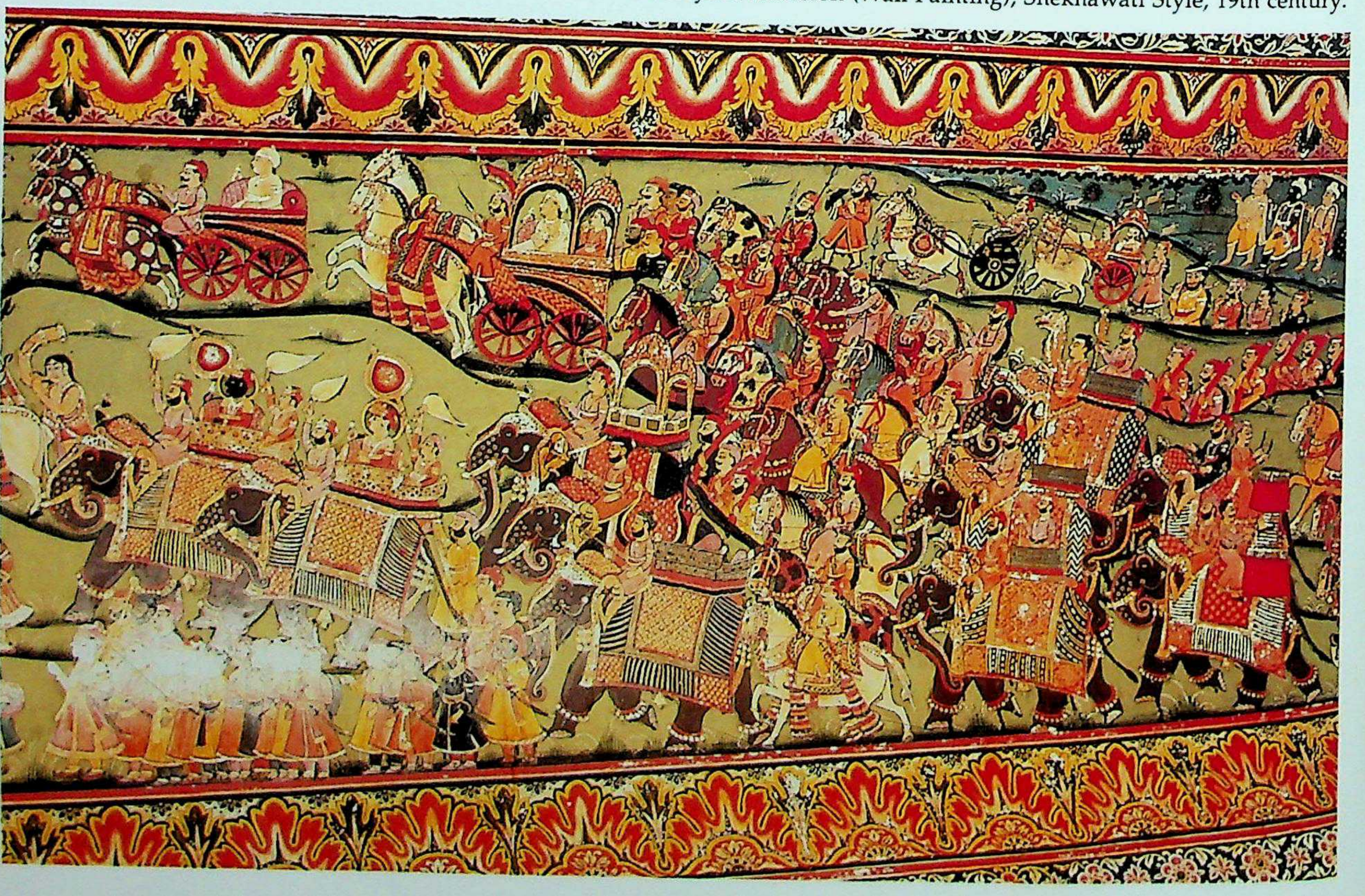


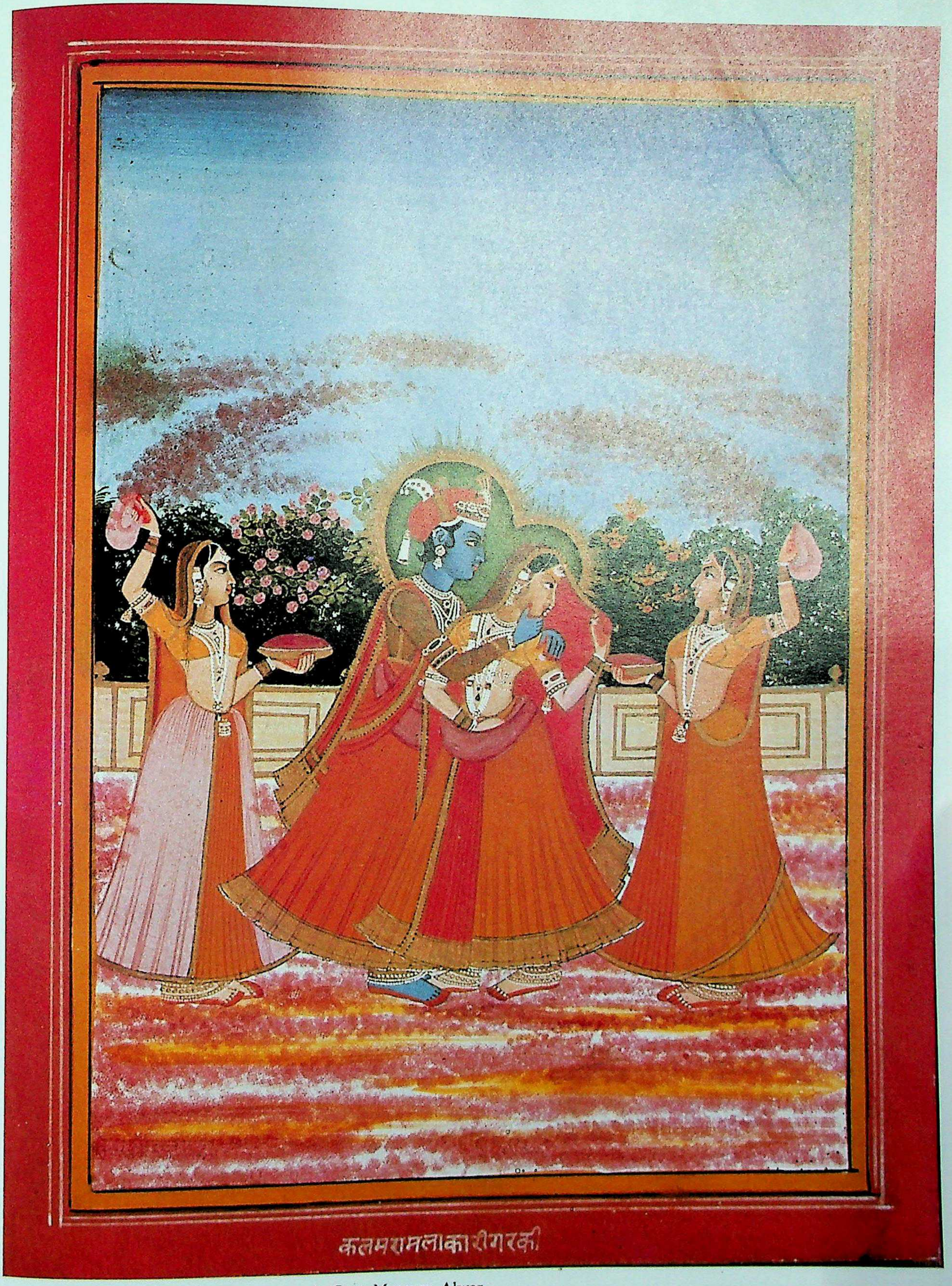
34. *Kunjbihar*, Jaipur Style, 1815 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.



35. Royal Elephant (Wall Painting), Shekhawati Style, 19th century.

36. Royal Procession (Wall Painting), Shekhawati Style, 19th century.

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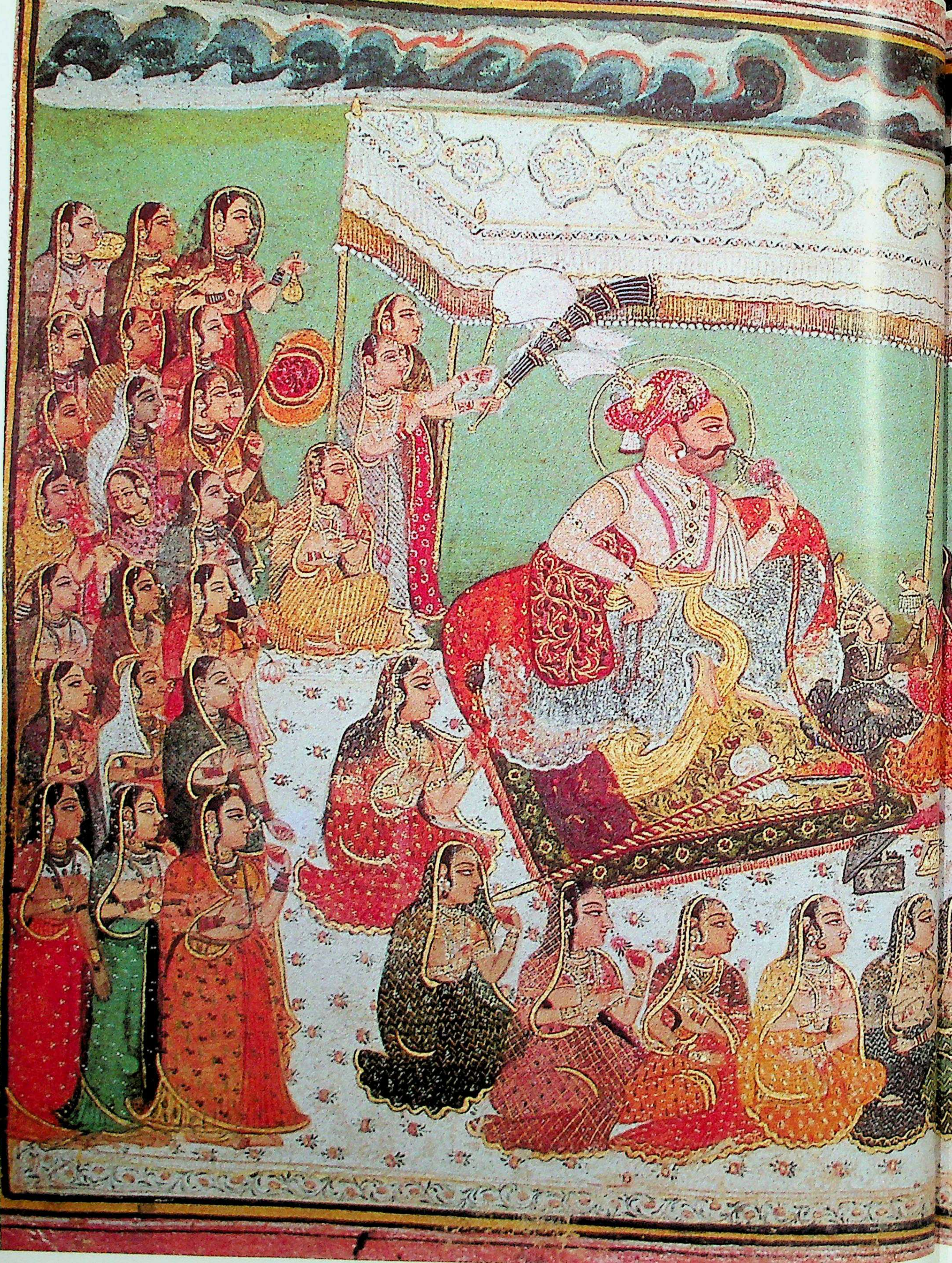
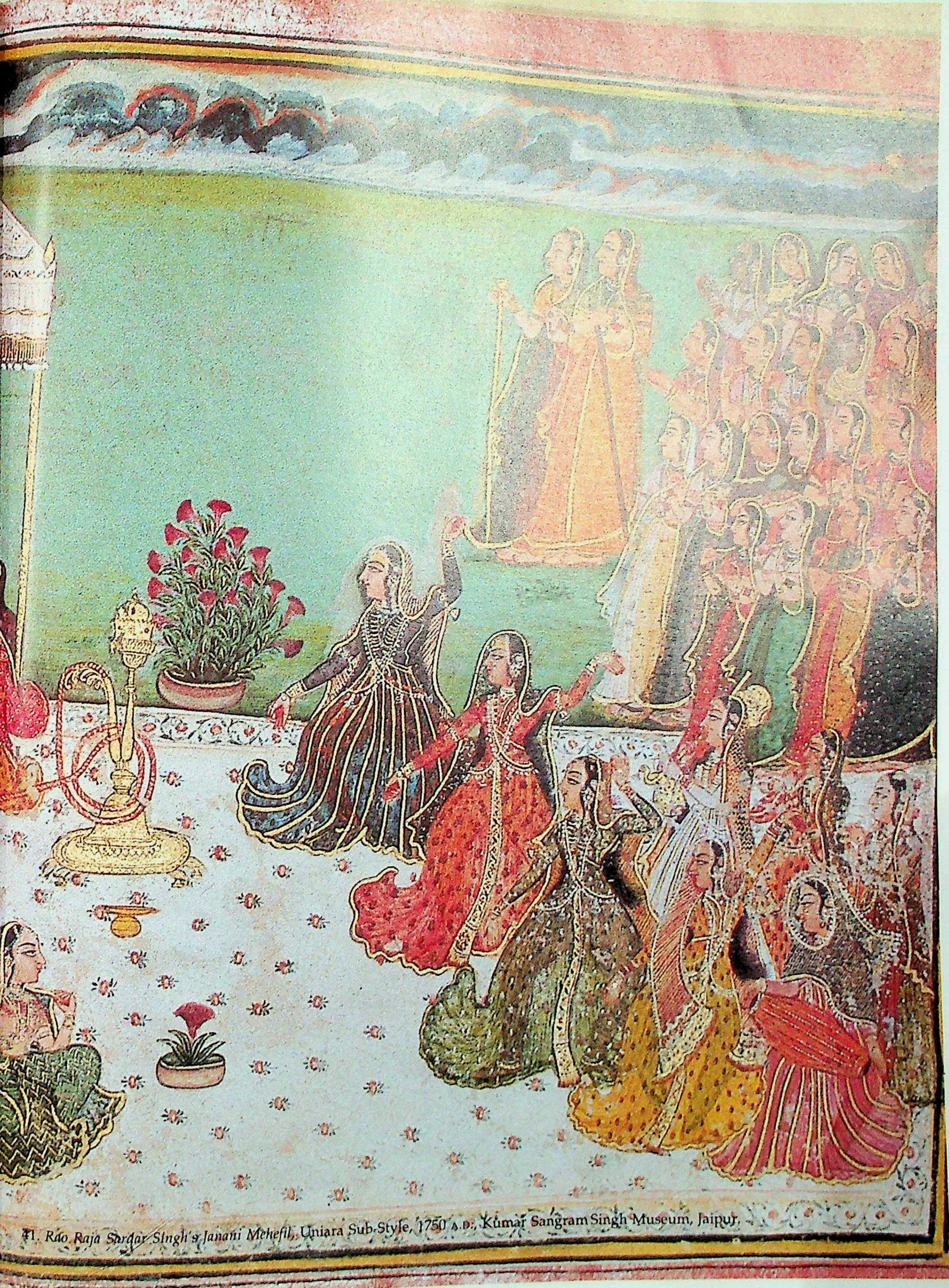
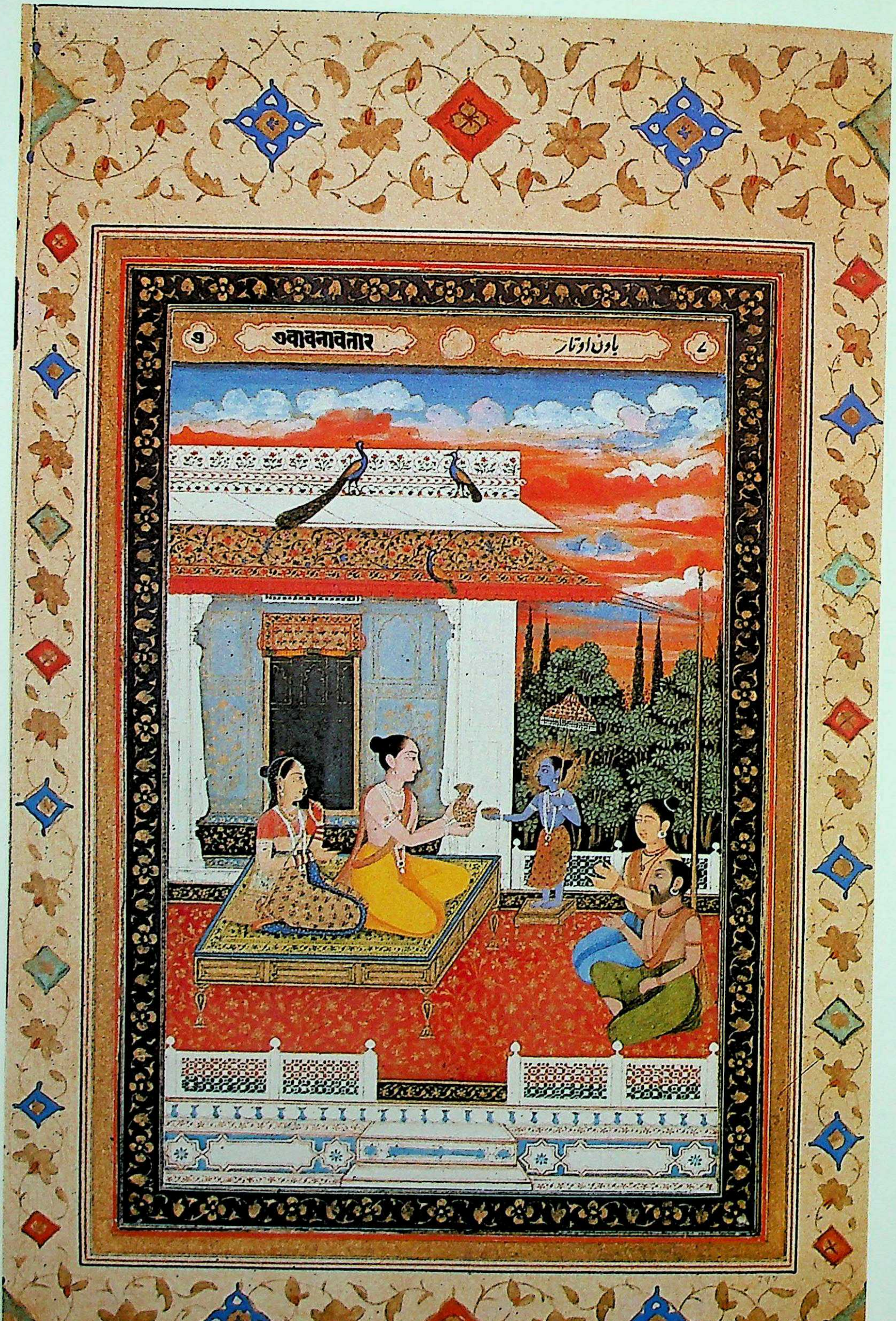
37. *Holi*, Alwar Style, early 19th century, early Govt. Museum, Alwar.





41. *Rao Raja Sardar Singh's Janani Mehefil*, Uniara Sub-Style, 1750 A.D., Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.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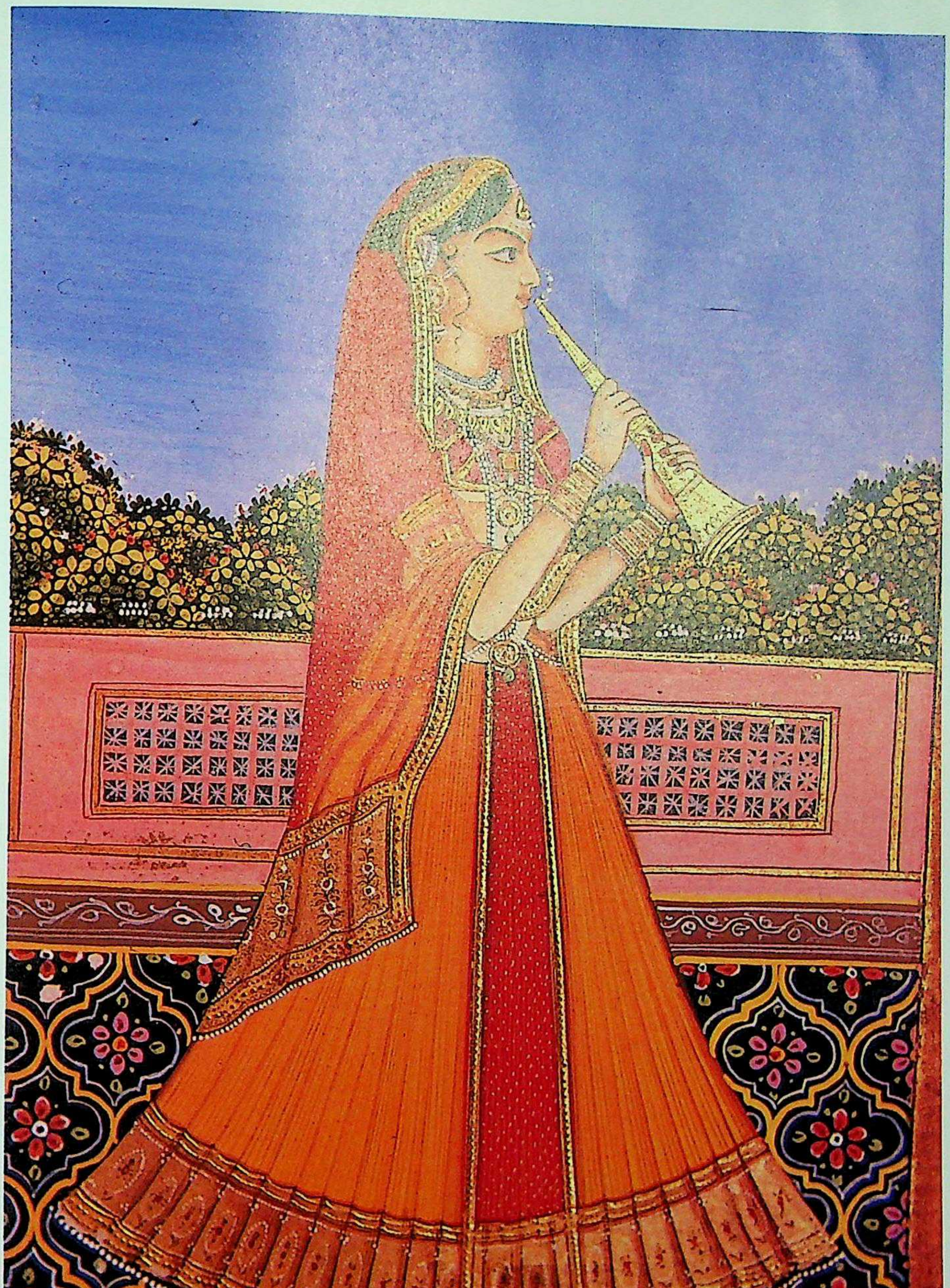
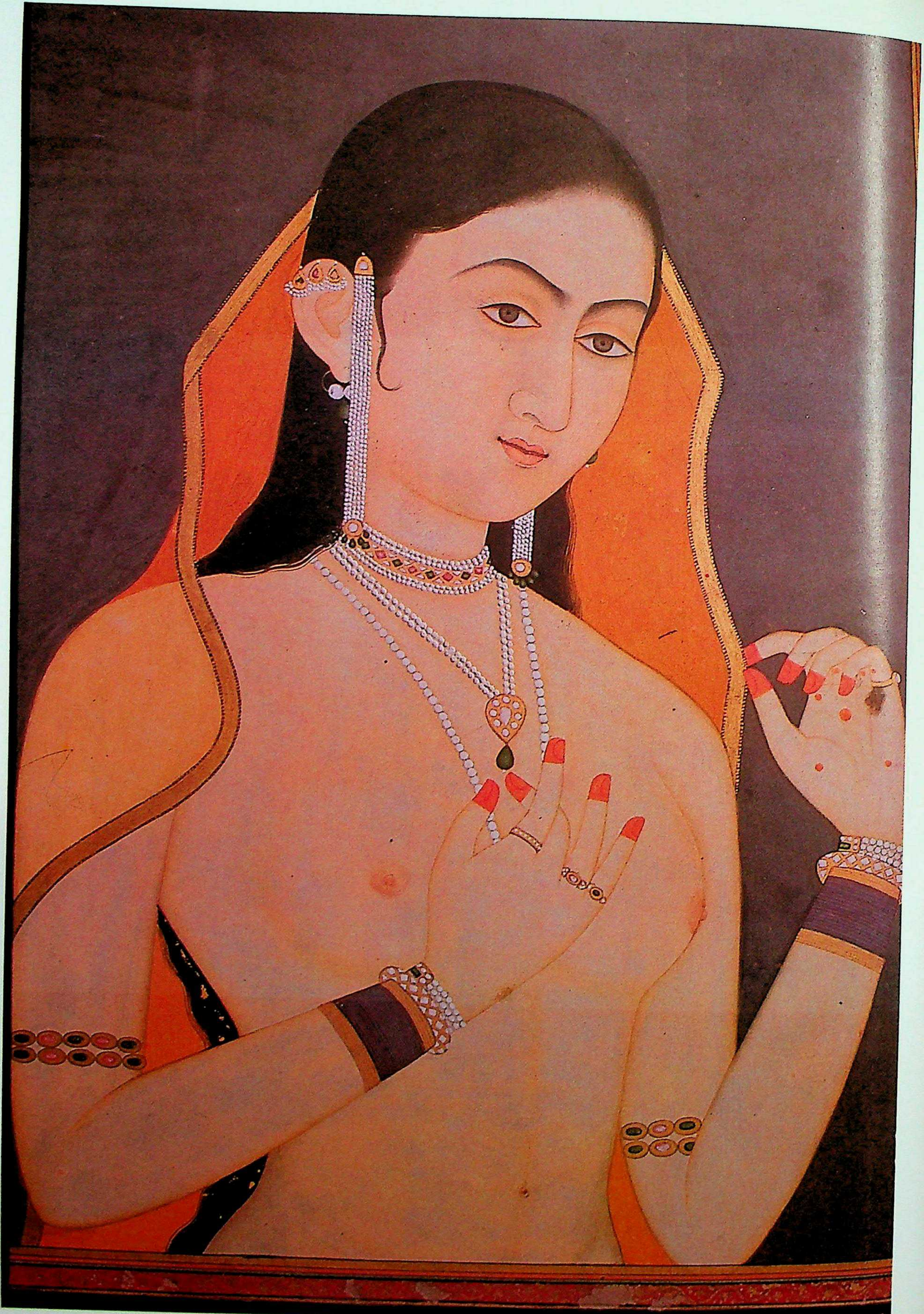
38. *Bawan Awatar*, Alwar Style, 19th century, Govt. Museum, Alwar.



39. *Nafeeri Vadan*, Alwar Style, 19th century, Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.



40. *Naika*, Alwar Style, 19th century, Kumar Sangram Singh Museum, Jaipur.

the Mughal Empire.[1] His grandson Rao Ratan Singh (1607-1631) received the title Sar-Buland Rai from Jehangir and established strong ties with the Mughals.[2] Shatzusal, grandson of Rao Ratan Singh (1631-1658), patronised many artists in his state. His son Bhav Singh (1651-1681) was also a keen lover of art and encouraged his subjects to take keen interest in poetry, music and painting.[3]

Poets like Mati Ram enjoyed the patronage of Bhav Singh, whose *Lalit-Lallam* and *Ras Raj* greatly impressed artists and lovers of art.[4] Bhav Singh and his son Anirudh Singh participated in wars in the south under the direction of the Mughals.

The southern style also influenced the Bundi style in the reign of Rao Budha Singh (1695-1731). In 1710 Rao Bhim Singh of Kota annexed Bundi, but with the help of the Mahrattas Rao Umaid Singh liberated it in 1748. As a result Bundi came under Mahratta influence.[5] In the 19th century Rajasthan came under British influence, and Bundi shared this experience.

Development

No definite dates are available regarding the origin of the Bundi style, but in the middle of the 18th century facts about its historical background were known.[6] On the basis of available material, two paintings concerning the Rag-Mala theme acquire significant historical value.[7] In the beginning of the 17th century this style,. a sub-branch of the Mewar school influenced by the Mughal style and endowed with original qualities, flourished under the patronage of art-loving kings.

Rao Chhattarsal constructed a Rang Mahal which was decorated with frescoes. From the text *Lalit-Lallam* could be easily gathered facts about deeds of chivalry, art criticism and patronage of art of Bhav Singh.

Many paintings of Rag-Ragini (Pl. 23), Nayika-Bhed, Krishna-Lila in his time now adorn private collections and museums.[8] Traditions of drawings on the basis of Ras Raj were initiated in this period. Towards the end of this age, Lal Kavi compiled a decorative text for Rao Budha Singh (1695-1731) which praised his sharp intellect and criticism of art.

In the first part of the 18th century the Bundi style flourished. This age, from the point of the abundance of paintings and distinct characteristics, is a landmark in the development of Rajput painting. The simplicity of early Bundi paintings and the impact of Mewar started blooming into their true forms in this period. The Bundi style, based upon traditional poetry and endowed with rich colours and attractive forms, and physical structures reached its zenith.

In the middle of the 18th century the style took a new turn in the period of Raja Umaid Singh (1748-1771), in which the manifold diversities of nature and the physical beauty of *nayak-nayika*, the firmness of brush and charm of conception are easily visible. Even though this style was greatly influenced by the Mughal style, it had its own independent attraction. The collection in the Prince of Wales Museum and the incomplete set of *Rasikpriya* in the National Museum belong to this period (Pl. 23).

Poetry and art made further advance in the following years. Rao Raja Vishnu Singh (1773-1821) was, like his father, a great connoisseur of art. Thousands of verses based upon *shringar* and Bhakti he compiled himself are still available in manuscript. He painted many texts on the basis of the traditional *shringar* style. At the beginning of the 19th century the whole country came under the influence of the Company style the British introduced.

Bundi failed to counter this new cultural force. Raja Ram Singh (1821-1889) of Bundi was a keen lover of art. He commissioned many pictures and patronised artists on a large scale. Paintings of this period however exhibit the impact of the West. Because of this influence the Bundi style, like other styles of Rajasthani painting, began to deteriorate. From the time of Raja Ram Singh light colours, a narrow range of sentiment, lack of imagination and poor drawing began to appear. In the second half of the 19th century the famous Bundi style of painting lapsed into oblivion.

Salient Features

In the early Bundi style the shape of the limbs of nayak-nayika and the arrangement of colours resemble those of the Mewar school. Paintings of the 17th century were greatly influenced by the southern style in representing female faces, foliage of trees, starry skies.

In the Bundi style tall human figures with slim and graceful bodies are striking qualities. Women have deep red lips, small noses, round faces and small chins.

Their small necks decorated with ornaments, embossed breasts tightly held up in brassieres, thin waists and felicity of expression are special characteristics of this style. Male figures wearing their turbans inclined downward, torsos covered with a long gown, *dupatta* round the waist and tight pyjama falling to the feet characterise the Bundi style. Men of fair complexion adorned with ornaments are easily noticeable.

Another special feature of the style is the application of seven colours in drawings of nature (Pl. 26). These paintings show blue skies partly covered with clouds, peacocks, squirrels, parrots, heron, deer, monkeys, elephants, lions, bushy gardens and forests with a variety of flowers and trees laden with fruits, ponds covered with creepers, lotus blooms in which geese, *vakul* and fish are seen sporting (Pl. 24). In short, the beauty of nature in all its diversity, vastness and colour is present in the Bundi style, and is not visible elsewhere except in the Kishangarh style.

The third highlight of the Bundi style is its drawing of architecture. Dome-shaped Rajasthani cenotaphs point skyward.

Subject

Rag-ragini (Pls. 23, 26), nayika-bhed (Pl. 24), ritu-varnan, Barah-masa, Krishna-Lila, royal court, festivals, wars are the principal themes of the Bundi style. Because of the predominance of the Vallabha sect pictures of Krishna-Lila were mainly painted. They included Rasikpriya, Bihari Satsai, Ras Raj and other verses. Some of these texts had flowed from the brushes of artists who had not chosen any poetic texts but were based on their own poetry.

Kota Style

The Kota style came into the limelight in 1952 when Col. T.G. Gear Anderson presented his personal collection to the Victoria and Albert Museum and some of the paintings were in styles different from the Bundi style. For this reason the type of painting which flourished in Kota is termed the Kota style, which may also be considered a sub-branch of the Bundi style. But because of its originality and high artistic quality its separate identity should be recognised.

Development

Favourably impressed by Madho Singh Hada, son of Rao Ratan Singh of Bundi state, Emperor Shahjahan gifted him a few territories as a token of esteem. As a result an independent state of Kota came into being in 1631. But on the basis of available facts its establishment is considered more likely by the end of the 17th century.[10]

It is difficult to distinguish between the earlier paintings and those in the Bundi style. Credit for creating an independent Kota style goes to Raja Ram Singh (1696-1705). Many paintings of his period are available even today.[11] They reveal that the impact of the Bundi style on the Kota style was considerable.

After Raja Ram Singh, Maharawal Bhim Singh (1703-1720) paid special regard to the Krishna-Bhakti tradition. He surrendered his palace and capital to Lord Krishna after having built a temple and changed his name to Krishan Dass and Kota's name to Nand Gram and Barsana of Shergarh.

Thus he made Kota Braj Bhoomi,[12] and this new move greatly influenced the artistic world of Rajasthan. Paintings of his time depicting Krishna-Charitra are fairly easy to obtain. After Maharawal Bhim Singh, Arjun Singh (1720-1764) also preserved the traditional painting of Krishna-Charitra. Many paintings belonging to this time are available in the State Museum, Kota. A pictorial Bhagwad text compiled in 1760 is presumed to be in the Mewar style, but many scholars believe it belongs to the Kota-Bundi style pictorial texts. This text comprises 1190 pages and hundreds of small and big paintings.

For a new landmark in the Kota style of painting credit goes to art-loving Raja Umaid Singh (1771-1820). He also had a strong inclination for hunting. The dense forests of Kota abounded with many wild animals like lion, tiger, cheetah, pig, deer (Pl. 27). In the reign of Umaid Singh artists took a keen interest in depicting hunting themes, and the Kota style acquired a great reputation for painting such scenes.

In the *darbar* hall of the palace many frescoes are based on the Krishna-Lila epic, and among hundreds of miniatures in the Great Palace many relate to Krishna-Charitra. Two pictorial texts belonging to the beginning of the 19th century depict the significance of the Pushti sect. One of them a text of 45 pages entitled *Vallabhotsava-Chandrika* decorated with 38 beautiful pictures relating to Vallabhacharya and his seven sons, seven attributes, and various festivals in 12 months had been created.[14] The other, Gita Panchmel, is a similar artistic text of six paintings concerning Radha-Krishna and their attributes.

This tradition of the Kota style continued to be popular in the reign of Raja Ram Singh II (1822-1866) (Pl. 28), but the British influence heralded its downfall like that of others.

Salient Features

The Kota style has some characteristics of the Bundi style, but also its own distinct features. Because of the influence of the Vallabha sect, male and female links are like those of *goswamis* and priests. Stout bodies, shining faces, bulging eyes are special features of the Kota style. Application of green, red and golden colours in Kota style painting is very pleasing to see. Animals painted in this style include deer, tiger, lion and pig.

The style of painting relating to the Hadoti school belonged to Jhalawar and other important feudal states besides the Kota and Bundi styles. Ancient cave paintings have also been found in this region,[15] and paintings in the Bundi style are found in art museums all over the world. Probably Bundi has earned the distinction of having produced the largest number of paintings in Rajasthan.

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CHAPTER V

DHUNDAR SCHOOL

In ancient times the regions in and around Jaipur were known as Dhundar. Most parts of Alwar, Jaipur, Shekhawati are still called Dhundar Pradesh. Some scholars are of the opinion that this province acquired the name because of a demon called Dhund. But other scholars hold the view that this province, with shifting sand dunes, was recognised as Dhundar Pradesh.[1] The Dhund river might also be considered the principal basis for its name.

Under the banner of the Dhundar school, we may study the Amber, Jaipur, Alwar and Shekhawati styles, and the Uniara substyle (Pl. 41) among others. Dhundar Pradesh has its own distinct features and geographical boundaries. In touch with the centre of gravity of the administration, Delhi, and with the centre of culture, Braj, the Dhundar style of painting had continued its pace of development through various new forms from time to time.

Amber Style

The Amber style (Pl. 30) is the rich heritage of the rajas of the Kacchava and Kush dynasties. In the 10th-11th centuries they had a large kingdom around Gwalior. In 1071, Sod Deo along with his son Dullaha Rai came to Dhundar Pradesh and steadily expanded their kingdom. Their descendants made Amber their capital, and this city held this position for seven centuries.[2]

Ancient specimens of the Amber style of painting are not available. Frescoes drawn around 1600-1614 upon cenotaphs in Amber are the oldest available pieces of this style.[3] Paintings in the cenotaph of Bhar Mal acquire great significance from the historical point of view. Inside the cenotaph a panel of these 40 paintings depicts the early history of the Amber style.

These paintings were drawn straight upon the stone without having made them in the prevalent Jaipur Arais style. Each painting is based upon a definite principle. According to subject matter these paintings include scenes of hunting, incarnation, wrestling, yoga, Laila-Majnu, rag-ragini, elephant, camel and fighting among animals.

Original colours like *garun, safeda, kaluns* were used in these paintings. Drawing had been made either in red or black and colour was applied on the figures. The strong influence of the paintings of the period in reigns of Akbar and Jehangir is clearly discernible in these paintings. Besides the impact of artistic folk art a circular *jamma* with four pointed edges and Jehangiri turban are some special characteristics of these paintings. Women in Rajasthani attire, including *ghagra, odhni,* blouse, adorned with Mughal style ornaments are frequently seen in such paintings.[4]

Besides the cenotaphs of Amber, frescoes in the Amber style may be noticed in the so-called Mughal garden of Bairath, in which themes like *rag-ragini*, Krishna-Lila, *nayika-bhed*, Laila-Majnu, wrestlers, elephant riding, horse riding, camel riding were painted. To study the early stage of the Amber style, these paintings deserve careful scrutiny.[5]

Mojamabad, adjoining Jaipur, was also a centre of the early Amber style. A cenotaph of Mojamabad which possessed frescoes in this style is now in ruins. The Amber style has been much influenced by the Mughal style.

In the middle of the 16th century the rajas of Rajasthan began to bow to the mighty Mughal Empire. In 1562, Akbar signified his good relations with the kingdom of Amber by marrying the daughter of Raja Bhar Mal.[6] In the reign of Raja Man Singh (1589-1610), the Kacchava dynasty of Amber maintained very close relations with the Mughals.

The cenotaphs of Amber, the gardens of Bairath and Mojamabad, the birthplace of Raja Man Singh, have frescoes which were greatly influenced by the Mughal style. The famous pictorial text *Rajma-Namah* (1584-1588) compiled at the court of Akbar and preserved in the city Palace Museum, Jaipur, provides very useful information about the initial growth of the Amber style and details regarding artistic exchanges.

The second stage of development of this style commenced in the reign of Mirza Raja Jai Singh (1625-1667). The renowned *Ritikaleen* poet Bihari was one of his courtiers. Bihari-Satsai deeply influenced many artists. Paintings belonging to this age are rarely available. They exhibit the salient features of folk art (Pl. 30) and the impact of the Mughal school.

Salient Features

The style possesses its own characteristics, in which the structure of bodies of both male and female has been much influenced by Rajasthani folk art (Pl. 30). Because of their kinship with the Mughals mutual cultural exchange was natural. Hence the impact of ornamented dresses belonging to the periods of Akbar and Jehangir is discernible.

Jamma with four pointed edges and later circular *jamma* and tight-fitting pyjama, Jehangiri turban style, dress like that worn by Chhagtai women, are quite visible in the Amber style. Black *phunthne* on hands, *ghagra, odhni* are closely linked with Rajasthani style.

Poor quality of line is seen in the Apbhransh style, and so are natural colours like *hirmich, kaluns, safeda, pewari,* extensively used in the shape of animals, birds and trees as in folk art. In sum and substance, the Amber style has its own constitution quite visible in these frescoes and in some pictorial texts.

Jaipur Style

The Jaipur style has inherited the Amber style as a cultural legacy. Or it may be presumed that the Amber style itself grew in a new environment at the time of founding Jaipur city, and since then it has been called the Jaipur style. Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh (Pl. 31) laid the foundation of Jaipur in 1727 and constructed it as his new capital instead of Amber. He had the distinction of being a great astronomer, astrologer, mathematician and keen lover of art. Hence he had built many beautiful and majestic buildings like the observatory, Chandra Mahal, Jai Niwas Bagh, Talkatora, Sisodia Rani Palace and thus gave a new cultural direction to Jaipur.[7]

Jaipur, because of its architectural charm, pleasant combination of colours and scientifically laid out plan, is known as the Pink City of India. Owing to its traditional miniatures, artistic cottage industries, existing festivals and colourful dress Jaipur has been a great cultural centre since its inception.

The newly laid out city attracted architects, artists and other learned personalities from every part of the country. The traditional Kacchava or Amber style preferred tender drawings. Because of the close ties with the Mughal court, the impact of the Mughal style became more pronounced in this period. Muhammad Shah was a court artist of great skill. Because of the powerful cultural impact of the Mughals some doubts about paintings of this period are often heard.

Sawai Jai Singh's son Raja Ishwari Singh (1743-1750) was a great Tantric. In his reign he was engaged in a constant struggle with the Mahrattas and ended his life with a dose of poison. But in his short rule he constructed an *iser latt* to commemorate his victories over the Mahrattas.

In his time, Sahib Ram, a *chittara*, emerged as a talented artist. He painted a portrait of Raja Ishwari Singh with the help of Chandras which has been recognised as of high quality. Another famous artist of his period was Lall Chittara, who had painted many pictures depicting animals and birds in struggle. These pictures are very lively.

In the reign of Sawai Madho Singh I (1751-1767), consistent instability prevailed because of differences between Jats and Mahrattas, but still Sisodia Rani Palace and Chandra Palace were adorned with frescoes. The traditional frescoes of Jaipur had reached the portals of *havelis*. The *havelis* of Pundrik deserve special notice.

Sahib Ram earned the reputation of being a seasoned artist in this period. He painted large-sized portraits with Ramji Dass and Govindji, two more artists, while Lall Chittara continued to paint various royal sports. In paintings of this age the Mughal influence began to wane and a pure Rajput style showed signs of replacing it. In place of paintings the traditional ornamented *Manikuttim* style in which beads, red and wooden *mannis*, are pasted together, began to receive encouragement.[9]

The reign of Maharaja Prithvi Singh (1767-1779) was short. Artists patronised by the state continued to pursue their vocation. Court artists Hira Nand and Trilok earned great fame. In 1778 they drew a life-sized portrait of their maharaja.

With his sudden death his younger brother Sawai Pratap Singh (1779-1803) took charge of the administration. He was a keen lover of art and literature and he added new chapters to the development of artistic and literary activities in the state. He was drawn towards religion and poetry, and he composed poems under his pen name *Braj Niddhi.* He also dedicated himself to Pushti Marg, which had developed his devotion to the Krishna-Bhakti cult. Twenty-one texts he compiled are still available. The world famous Hawa Mahal was built in his regime. Pritam Niwas, adorned with traditionally artistic doors, Diwan-e-Aam, the upper floors of Chandra Mahal, were designed by him as well as built under his guidance.

As he was both poet and devotee many poets and artists congregated at his court. The seasoned artist Sahib Ram continued to practise his art there. Three pictures he painted have been hailed as unique specimens of his painting. Two are portraits of the maharaja and the third a dance pose of Radha-Krishna.

In this period themes relating to the *lilas* of Radha-Krishna, *nayika-bheda, rag-ragini, ritu-varnan* were extensively portrayed. Large-sized portraits of *raja-rani,* many paintings concerning Bhagwad-Puran, Durga-Saptshati, Krishna-Lila deserve special mention here.[10] Other artists besides Sahib Ram included Jeevan, Ghassi, Salig Ram, Raghu Nath, Ram Sevak, Gopal, Udai, Hukma, Chimna, Daya Ram, Raju, Niranjan who deserve special notice. They worked on both frescoes and miniatures in the Jaipur style.

This style of painting continued to flourish till the reign of Sawai Jagat Singh (1803-1818). The renowned traditional poet Padamakar lived in his court. He linked the Jaipur royal house with Bihari Satsai after having compiled. *Jagad Vinod.*[11] Paintings titled *Goverdhan Dharan* and *Ras-Mandal* are exquisite examples of the art of that age.

After Sawai Jagat Singh the original form of the Jaipur style did not last long once the impact of British culture began to be felt.[12] In the period of this maharaja, artists began to pursue painting in the representational style. Portraits were drawn like photographs.

After studying this new trend the maharaja set up the Maharaja's School of Arts and Crafts and thus gave a new direction to the local style of painting. According to his directive, the whole city was painted pink. The traditional beauty of Jaipur thus vanished into oblivion.

The Jaipur style was not confined to the royal court but flourished and developed at adjoining centres belonging to feudal lords related to the Jaipur family. From time to time pictures had been painted at Iserda, Siwar, Jhillaya, Chommu, Malpura and Samod. The artistic activities of some centres of these feudal lords had emerged in the new style with many distinctive features.

At Uniara a new substyle developed, combining both Jaipur and Bundi styles. Frescoes of the palaces of Uniara and miniatures preserved in private collections of the Uniara royal family and Sangram Singh testify to this fact. Paintings in the palace of Samod were also drawn on the basis of the traditional frescoes of the Jaipur style.

Generally speaking, the traditions of frescoes available in palaces, temples and *havelis* had spread far and wide. The style of decorations which had adorned temples, cenotaphs and *havelis* in Shekhawati during the 19th century was influenced by frescoes of the Jaipur style.

Salient Features

The early Jaipur style being in accordance with the traditional Amber style and because of contacts with the Mughal court had flourished under the Mughal influence. But by and by it acquired the originality of Rajput culture, which had exhibited the predominance of the folk art character and grandeur of Rajputs in paintings of the Jaipur style.

The *haveli* of Pratap Narain, along with traditions of drawing frescoes in Galta, the *haveli* of Pundrik, Chandra Mahal, Sisodia Rani Palace and the palatial buildings of Nagar-Shreshthis and temples with hundreds of pictorial texts, thousands of miniatures and life-sized and larger portraits are specimens of the legacy of the Jaipur style.

According to Sangram Singh, the Jaipur style possesses the following significant features.

In the Jaipur style artists had infused a new tradition of painting life-sized portraits. Early pictures had certainly been drawn in a traditional style. Thousands of portraits and group paintings are salient features of the Jaipur style, in which portraits of feudal lords, artists and group paintings of royal processions, *mehfils, utsav,* colourful hunting scenes had been specially made. In the tradition of miniatures and pictorial texts, Geet-Govind, Ramayan, Krishna, Durga-Saptshati, Mahabharat, *rag-ragini, barah-masa, nayika-bhed,* the art of pleasure was extensively painted.

The fresco tradition is the main feature of the Jaipur style. In the Amber style, in palaces, temples, cenotaphs and *havelis, arais* was applied after the construction of Jaipur city and drawing of frescoes had become an integral part of architecture. This tradition gained great popularity in the 19th century and the *seths* of Shekhawati built palatial new *havelis* in accordance with the new economic order in their respective towns and decorated them with a variety of paintings.

Artists in the Jaipur style applied deep reds in drawing margins on paintings. White, red, yellow were extensively utilised. Applications of gold and silver were also made.

In paintings of this style men and women appear in proportion. Male figures have clean, attractive faces. They are often depicted with swords tied to their waists. Regarding ornamented dress, males are shown wearing *sehra* tied with *turra kalangi.*

Wealthy men are shown wearing turban, *kurta, pyjama, jamma, chogga, angrakhi,* belt, *pataka,* shoes in such paintings.

Female figures are shown with large eyes, bunch of long hair, stout physique and pleasant mood. Like other Rajasthani styles in this style too female figures adorned with *tikka, toti, bali,* necklace, *hansli, satlari, tevta, kantha, bajuvand,* bangles, *payajeb* were depicted. In drawing dresses blouse, *kurta, dupatta, lehnga, besor tilak* and embroidered shoes were frequently used. Artists drew elegant gardens to provide the background in paintings. Lion, tiger, sheep, goat, camel, horse, ox, peacock, duck, parrot were painted to suit a picture's theme.

After 1950, because of the introduction of photography, coupled with foreign influences in art and architecture, foreign themes were introduced and assimilated in the Jaipur style, and the original characteristics of the style began to deteriorate slowly.

Uniara Substyle

The wall-paintings of the palace of Uniara Thikana in Tonk district, the 'miniatures' from the personal collection of Rao Raja Rajendra Singh of Uniara and also the paintings from the personal collection of Kumar Sangram Singh, bear their own identity and these can be classified under Jaipur substyle. Situated on the border of Jaipur and Bundi States, Uniara Thikana imbibed the impact of Bundi art due to matrimonial relations, and the influence of Jaipur art also on account of blood-relations thereby evolving a new style of painting which is known as Uniara substyle.

The descendants of Naruji of the Amber Kachhwahas came to be known as 'Naruka'. In his lineage Rao Chandra Bhan Dasawant (1586-1660) fighting for the Mughals displayed remarkable valour in the Kandhar Battle (1606). Pleased by his chivalry the Mughal emperor bestowed upon him the four parganas of Uniara, Nagar, Kakor and Banetha.

In the fifth generation of Rao Chandra Bhan was born an ardent art-lover Rao Raja Sardar Singh (1740-77) who built magnificent palaces in Uniara and Nagar, and patronised artists like Dheema, Meer Bagas, Kashi, Ram Lakhan and Bhim etc. A close observation of the wall-paintings of Nagar and Uniara palaces reveals the collective influence of Bundi and Jaipur substyles on them.

While Nagar wall-paintings show the total impact of Bundi style, Uniara paintings especially manifest the two-fold influence of Bundi and Jaipur styles. The wall-paintings of the ruined palace are greatly artistic, and these cover a variety of topics. Here we have paintings like *Barahmasa* based on *Keshav's Kavi Priya*, Ragragini, portraits of kings and a number of religious drawings. Among the portraits of kings, the personal portraits of Naruji, Dasaji, Chandra Bhan, Fateh Singh, Sangram Singh, Sardar Singh, Jaswant Singh, Bisan Singh, Bhim Singh, Budh Singh of Bundi, the kings of Jaipur, Kota, Mewar etc. have been painted with utmost excellence. Among the religious paintings, Krishna Leela, various incarnations, Shiva-Parvati are remarkably noteworthy.

The Uniara substyle is also revealed through the 'manuscripts' and miniature paintings. The Bhagwad Puran, Ramayan and a number of 'miniatures' from the personal collection of Rao Raja Rajendra Singh are very important from the point of view of art. In the personal collection of Kumar Sangram Singh lots of 'miniatures' are available among which the paintings of *Zanani and Mardani Mehfil* (Men and Ladies' Concerts) are worthy of special mention. Some paintings can also be sighted in the National Museum, New Delhi.

On the basis of the achievements of above wall-paintings, 'manuscripts' and 'miniatures', the Uniara substyle has acquired a distinct form in which a new tradition of painting emerged from an amalgamation of two styles. The Uniara Thikana following the Kushwaha cultural tradition was under the domain of Jaipur state, and as such the Uniara substyle bears the stamp of total impact of Jaipur style in terms of structure, colour-scheme, and dresses etc.

A number of Jaipur painters have also contributed to this style. On account of the geographical proximity, located near Bundi as it is, and also due to the marriage of the daughter of Rao Raja Sardar Singh with Bundi King Dalel Singh, the Bundi painters had a chance to visit Uniara, and as such the total influence of Bundi style is marked on the architecture, natural-setting, face-structure and the decoration of these paintings.

In view of the Nagar and Uniara wall-paintings, there is a great scope for further work on this substyle.

Shekhawati Style

Studies of painting have also brought the Shekhawati region into the limelight. Traditional drawings of frescoes in the Amber and Bairath styles and paintings created in palaces, temples and particularly in the *havelis* of Jaipur influenced the Shekhawati region, and the *haveli* style of painting, music, architecture engulfed it.

In the 15th century Shekhaji, grandson of Mokulji, earned a great reputation for being a brave man, as great in the art of war as in imparting justice, who had set up an independent kingdom which acquired much fame as Shekhawati state. This territory is an integral part of the Rajasthan desert and is recognised as the confluence of wealth, education and art. Known as Marukantar in the Ramayan and Mahabharat ages, this territory, engulfed within the boundaries of Matsya Pradesh, should be treated as lying within the campus of the Dhundar school.

In ancient days, this part of the land being surrounded by dangerous and dense forests and rich in deposits of copper, was a great centre of culture. Recent archaeological excavations at Ganeshwar, ten kilometres from Neem-ka-Thana, revealed thousands of spikes of arrows, pointed edges of spears, ornaments, fish hooks and axes belonging to the copper age. A civilisation 5,000 years old has been discovered and proves beyond doubt that the copper used in the Harappan and Mohenjodaro and Indus Valley civilisations was procured only from this site. So old and abundant were these prehistoric utensils made of copper that they were not available elsewhere in the world.[13]

The Ganeshwar civilisation would undoubtedly herald a new era in the annals of archaeology. Remnants of the Mahabharat and Ramayan and Bodh ages are sometimes discovered in Shekhawati. The influence of the art of Gurjara-Pratiharas spread in wide areas of Shekhawati. Many spots like Jodhpura, Sunari, Harsh Nath, Shakambari remained as great centres of art and culture.

But the decline of painting in the Shekhawati region should be considered from the point of view of construction of *havelis.* After the establishment of British rule in Rajasthan capitalists of this area expanded their horizons of commercial activity. They entered into partnership with the British in trade and by dint of their initiative and unlimited boldness and with their jugs and ropes migrated to Bombay and Calcutta.

Shekhawati merged with various commercial centres in the early part of the 19th century and due to the exodus of traders to pursue their business activities elsewhere this territory became the cradle of the goddess Lakshmi. Hence the Birlas of Pilani, Poddars of Nawalgarh, Bangurs of Baggar, Ruias of Ramgarh and Dalmia, Bajaj, Jaipuria occupied significant positions in the Indian economy. They constructed large *havelis,* temples and cenotaphs in their towns and had them decorated by artists. The art galleries of *havelis* and their internal and external perspectives were adorned with attractive paintings (Pls. 36, 37).

As painting in *havelis* is a growth of the 19th century, it has been greatly influenced by folk art and the Company style. With the advent of the British, faster means of communication, new lifestyle, and development of new inventions, these wealthy traders painted their *havelis* on the British pattern. The cultural impact of the 19th century could well be studied in the Shekhawati style.

These *havelis* of *seths* laid out in vast areas were built on the principle of *Bharatiya Shilpa-Shastra.* Great scope exists to undertake the study of those located at Nawalgarh, Fatehpur, Laxmangarh, Mukundgarh, Churu, Sardar Sehar, Ramgarh from the point of view of artistic values and architectural principles. These were decorated with artistic wooden doors and *gavaksh* doors, and their front walls were adorned with paintings influenced by the Rajput and Company styles.

Interiors of *havelis* were painted as far as possible. In some *havelis* art galleries were established with engraved mirrors and gold polish.[14] Entrance gates were decorated artistically. In the above-mentioned towns paintings expressing the moods of Radha-Krishna are abundantly visible in temples. Cenotaphs located at Reengus, Ramgarh, Bissau, Choori Ajitgarh were elaborately painted in an advanced stage of the Amber style.

There is not a single town in Shekhawati where *havelis* and temples have not been decorated with paintings. From the point of view of impact of painting, Shekhawati may be classified in three parts:

1. Region adjoining Jaipur: frescoes at Chommu, Samod, Reengus. Srimadhopur, Ajitgarh are greatly influenced by the Jaipur style. Their themes and colouring tend to be very close to that style.
2. Styles of paintings at Patan, Ganeshwar, Chhapoli, Khetri and many towns of Jhunjhunu were greatly influenced by the folk art of Haryana.
3. Effect of the Marwar school was very great at Nagore, towards Bikaner and towns located in the western part of Sikar.

But even after this traditional impact the Shekhawati style appears to maintain its own characteristics.

Salient Features

1. Drawings of elephants and horses and guards were made in bold relief in the brackets of *havelis*.
2. Drawings of gods and goddesses were painted in sharp outlines on *gavaksh* and main gates.
3. Below projections, in spaces between *todas* artists skilfully painted themes like wrestling, churning, *godohan*, *dhola-maru*, *nayika* engaged in *shringar*, curious animals, birds, divine manifestations, demons, *kam-kala*, love, *rag-ragini*, *barah-masa*, saints and ascetics, folklore.
4. The exterior and interior walls of many *havelis* are covered with pictures showing the impact of the Company style and of industrialisation. Railway trains, motor vehicles, bicycles, sewing machines, aeroplanes, sofa sets and other articles belonging to the Victorian age may be seen. The impact of British rule brought great changes in manner of eating, style of dressing, way of living, which have been well depicted in these paintings.

Areas of Shekhawati like Sahapura, Ajitgarh, Patan, Khetri, Bissau, Pilani, Chirawa, Nawalgarh, Ramgarh, Baggar, Sikar, Reengus, Chommu, Samod, too could prove useful within limits for a special study of artistic growth.

Alwar Style

As a study of the Alwar style has never been undertaken, it has not come into the limelight. Occasional references have however been made to it by connoisseurs of art from time to time. In regard to painting, examination of available materials (frescoes), manuscripts, miniatures, plates of ivory, mica and wood reveal a style of painting no less impressive than other styles of Rajasthan.[15] Examples of this style are preserved in many museums, temples, palaces and in private collections yet to be researched.

Like other styles, the origin of this style is presumed to have taken place after the establishment of Alwar state. Rao Raja Pratap Singh (1756-1790), by his bravery, intelligent statesmanship and political ability created an independent kingdom after conquering parts of Bharatpur and Jaipur.[16] In 1770, after having laid out Rajgarh on a new pattern, he constructed a strong fortress there and made it his capital.

About this time two artists named Dhalu Ram and Shiv Kumar migrated to Alwar from Jaipur.[17] They presented some of their artistic work to the maharaja. Shiv Kumar is believed to have returned to Jaipur but Dhalu Ram was appointed in charge of the state museum, which contained the private collection of pictures of the royal family.

Dhalu Ram was skilled in drawing frescoes. The beautiful frescoes in the Sheesh Mahal of Rajgarh fort were probably painted under his supervision. If we admit this view, these frescoes may be presumed to be the best specimens of the early stage of the Alwar style.

About 30 kilometres from Alwar at Rajgarh, a beautiful palace of glass is located on the upper portion of the fortress. Paintings on perforated screens and lower walls deserve high praise. This Sheesh Mahal is located in two parts, a big hall about 25 feet by 12 feet and a verandah 25 feet by ten feet adjoining it from the north.

The ceiling of the hall is studded with glass of different colours, and white glass is engraved on the walls. At occasional spaces, many paintings were executed while the walls below the perforated screens are decorated with the foliage of trees.[18]

The frescoes of this palace show a variety of themes, including paintings relating to Krishna-Charit, Ram-Charit, *nayikas*, the royal court, music which may be presumed to be early developments of the Alwar style. Paintings concerned Ram Lila, Goverdhan Dharan, *Gocharan, Hindola, Veni-gunthan*, churning of milk and Ram's valour.

Raj Tilak and other artists are concerned with Krishna and Ram Lila. Among them, drawings of cows and seven coloured drawings deserve close attention. The drawings of Dhanush Bhang and Raj Tilak possess large dimensions, and elephant and horse riding revive memories of Ajanta.

Drawings of yawning *nayikas* removing a thorn, *nayikas* and maidservants engaged in beautification, are very pleasant. Paintings of women playing the *tabla, sitar* and *sarangi* are less pleasing. Scenes of the royal courts of Maharaja Pratap Singh and Bhaktawar Singh are painted on the walls. Blending of colours in various designs of foliage and the rhythm of the drawings are very impressive. Lines are very sharp and bold in relief.

The whole job was probably executed by an artist of great merit like Dhalu Ram. In the Sheesh Mahal of Rajgarh fort, the effect of the almond colour of the Ajanta style is very evident. Light green, blue and gold used in these paintings are impressive.

Sheesh Mahal was constructed around the period of Rao Raja Bhaktawar Singh (1790-1814), son of Rao Raja Pratap Singh. Bhaktawar Singh himself was a poet and keen lover of poetry. It is a sad reality that most of these paintings have started to deteriorate in the absence of patronage.

Bhaktawar Singh composed poetry under the names Chandra-Sakhi and Bhaktesh. *Dan Lila* is a very significant text he compiled. Having heard praise of Rao Raja's patronage of the arts, many artists from distant states came to Alwar, where their talents were suitably rewarded. In their period Alwar flourished culturally. Baldev Salga and Salig Ram were leading artists of the state.

Hundreds of paintings belonging to the time of Bhaktawar Singh are preserved in the State Museum, Alwar, which are worth seeing. Among them are pictures depicting the maharaja himself engrossed in religious conversation with *naths* and *jogis*, ascetics living in dense forests. They deserve special appreciation from the artistic point of view.[19] Most of the paintings preserved in the museum belong to Bhaktawar Singh.

After Rao Raja Bhaktawar Singh, for having given a new direction to the Alwar style the credit goes to his successors Maharaja Vinay Singh (1814-1857) and Raja Balwant Singh (1826-1845) of Tijara. In their period the style reached its zenith.

Vinay Singh earned a big reputation among kings of Alwar for his keen love of art. He contributed towards the development of the Alwar style as much as Akbar did for the Mughal school.

Hearing he was a connoisseur of art and virtuous, many artists, architects, scientists and musicians thronged to his court to emulate his example. It was in this period of Bahadur Shah (1806-1837) and Bahadur Shah III (1837-1859) that the Mughal Empire with its capital Delhi began to shrink in size and disintegrate politically.

Maharajas Vinay Singh and Balwant Singh were great connoisseurs of art and enriched their museum after purchasing artistic items. They organised a big library after procuring many pictorial texts. Rare games and unique arms were procured to enrich their collections of jewellery and armouries, and having provided royal patronage to artists they gave a dynamic thrust to the art of painting. They had a golden opportunity to display their artistic talents in the reign of Vinay Singh. He had learnt this art from Baldev, who occupied a high position at the royal court. He had originally worked in the traditional Alwar style. Later, he produced beautiful paintings strongly influenced by the Mughal school.

Maharaja Vinay Singh was keenly interested in getting pictorial texts painted as well as scrolls of script paintings. Because of this he invited Gulamali, a seasoned artist, Aga Mirza of Delhi, a great calligrapher, and Nathha Shah Dervesh, a highly skilled bookbinder also of Delhi. Calligraphy and painting texts like the Ramayan, Mahabharat, Srimad Bhagwad Gita, Geet-Govind, Durga-Saptashati, Gulistan, Koran unmistakably reflect the keen devotion of Vinay Singh to artistic activities. Calligraphy and drawing of Gulistan were a unique feature of his reign. Creation of this text cost Rs. 1 lakh. Pictures of the text were drawn by Baldev and Gulamali. All the calligraphy of this work was formed with a pen made of *seetha*. If a mistake appeared on any page the whole page was done all over again.[20]

Many sets of paintings of rag-ragini in the Alwar style are still available. Most of them had been painted during his period. A set of *barah masa* based upon verses of an unknown poet Anand Ram belongs to this time.

Khawaswal queen, Moosi Maharani of Rao Raja Bhaktawar Singh had performed the rite of Satti alongwith Rao Raja having left her son. Her son Balwant Singh had created trouble to secure the throne himself. To avert armed conflict the northern part of the state was handed over to Balwant Singh in 1826. He had made Tijara his capital but died without issue in 1845. Tijara was thus merged with Alwar state again.

In his reign of 23 years he devoted himself to the pursuit of artistic values, and his great contribution in this regard is a memorable event in India's cultural history. He was a king keenly devoted to promoting the arts. At his royal court artists like Salig Ram, Jamuna Dass, Chhote Lal, Baksa Ram and Nand Ram had painted pictorial texts, scrolls and miniatures extensively. Paintings by Jamuna Dass up to 1844 are available, and the names of Raja Balwant Singh and the artists who worked on these pieces are inscribed on them.

The paintings of Jamuna Dass, with their bold relief in line and soft, tender colour schemes are worth seeing.[21] Paintings with the name of Baksa Ram belonging to this period are preserved in the state museums and in private collections of Maharajkumar Yashwant Singh of Alwar's family.

After the merger of Tijara, the artistic heritage and artists moved to Alwar. Vinay Singh and Balwant Singh enriched their museum there after buying works of art from the royal treasury and library of the Mughals. Historic pictures of Mughal emperors, books, a Shahi album, sets of miniatures, weapons, dresses and equipment studded with precious stones are regarded as the proud heritage of the museum which would shed new light on the history of the Mughals.

Diwanji ka Rang Mahal, built in the reign of Vinay Singh (1830) deserves careful study for its frescoes. In the tradition of frescoes in the Alwar style it is another significant specimen. The forefathers of Bal Mukund held the position of *diwan* of Alwar state from time to time and Bal Mukund (1783-1855) held it under Maharaja Bhaktawar Singh. He had also served as *diwan* to Vinay Singh. Brave and benevolent, he was also highly religious and a keen lover of art.

A manuscript was compiled by his grandson about the *haveli* and Sheesh Mahal around 1836-37. Diwan Bal Mukund had the *haveli* constructed at the well of Munshi Bagh for his residential purposes. Very large, it is also sturdily built. Its gate is located in the west. A passage near this door leads to the Sheesh Mahal situated on the upper portion, in which gold workmanship of high quality and engraving of mirrors in various patterns and in different shades of colours had been performed.

This Sheesh Mahal was also constructed on the same plan as that of Rajgarh. A big room and a verandah in a northerly direction deserve admiration for architectural beauty. The walls of the room are studded with chips of white glass with paintings on a rectangular panel between the ceiling and the wall decorated with paintings depicting 24 incarnations, their six rag-raginis and various musical modes.

On the wall, attractive murals depicting Goverdhan-Dharan, *Veni-Gunthan, Hindola, Raj Tilak* and *mehfil* have been painted. Paintings of *nayikas* and doorkeepers are also very pleasant to look at. From the point of recalling a sentimental experience the frescoes of the Alwar style are unique. Well preserved, their condition is better than those of Rajgarh, but on the whole the lines of this Rang Mahal and the application of colours do not display the kind of charm noticeable in the Sheesh Mahal of Rajgarh.

This Rang Mahal, built in the period of Vinay Singh (1814-1857) amid the old *havelis* of Alwar, still reminds of the glories of old. The construction of many temples and palaces and the workmanship of foliages in various shades of colour make us understand the Alwar style.

The Sheesh Mahal of the Raj Mahal at Alwar is in a dilapidated state. Built in the last days of Vinay Singh, in the midst of *mahal* paintings of Shiv-Parvati and Ganesh drawn in a big room, they do not pay such attention to detail.

These paintings depict clearly the impact of photography. In the adjoining room, miniatures painted on paper were pasted on the wall and covered with glass, but such types of frescoes could not be regarded as belonging to the traditions of fresco painting though such experiments could be noticed in many other palaces of Rajasthan.

After Vinay Singh the period of Sawai Shiv Dan Singh is no less significant from the point of view of painting. He was learned in Persian and Hindi and had a special love for painting and music. His artistic tastes were well suited to his luxury-loving temperament. Hundreds of erotic paintings based upon Kam-kala and drawn in his time are good artistically (Pl. 40).

Being very fond of music, his court was crowded with *saniras* and dancing girls. Hundreds of such paintings depicting these *gayikas* are still available in private collections of the royal family, which show the effect of the Company's style besides that of photography.

In his time, an era of deterioration began in the Alwar style. With the Western impact the photograph began to receive greater prominence and the poetical beauty, sharpness of colour and bold relief in line and drawings of *purdahs* began to lose ground slowly.

Maharaja Mangal Singh, unlike his ancestors, had no love for the line Budha Ram, Udai Ram, Mool Chand, Jagan Nath, Ram Gopal, Bishen Lal continued to maintain in the Alwar tradition of painting.

Budha Ram had mastered the art of drawing animals and birds. He held the position of *daroga* of the Sheesh Mahal of Rajgarh and the museum of Alwar. Mool Chand acquired expertise in painting ivory pieces. Many paintings drawn on pieces of ivory are a unique feature of the Alwar style.

The traditions of painting frescoes also flourished in temples and cenotaphs in Rajasthan. Alwar had not lagged behind in the art of frescoes. In temples built by the mother of Mangal Singh at Thana and Bhurassidih many paintings had been executed. But these paintings being of later dates are not so artistic. In the temples of Raj Mahal some scattered paintings are still available although they almost vanished in the absence of official protection. In the temple of Laddu Khavasji glass was fixed over paintings made on paper on walls.

The frescoes drawn on cenotaphs belonging to Hanuvant Singh of Thana, Khavasji-ka-Bagh of Rajgarh, and the garden of Macchedi and on Tal Briksh, although time-worn, exhibit glimpses of grandeur even today. Among them, a large number of paintings depicting the *lilas* of Ram and Krishna and scenes of the royal court and state processions were drawn. Certainly, the art of these cenotaphs had greatly influenced folk art. The effect of folk art is more pronounced in the arrangement of lines and choice of colours.

Examination of the frescoes of the Alwar style shows that the style of painting developed there had flowed in dual waves, one in engraving frescoes, and the other into pictorial texts and miniatures.

In the reign of Jai Singh, former Maharaja of Alwar, architecture, music and painting flourished. A large portrait of his shows a scene of one of his processions and deserves special mention. Ram Shaya Nepalia, who painted this picture, should be remembered. In the history of Rajasthani art, the contribution of artists like Ram Gopal, Ram Prasad, Jag Mohan and Onkar Nath is no less significant.

Subject

As remarked earlier, the Alwar style attained diversity in regard to theme. In the royal courts of Rajputs, *mehfils*, Krishna-Lila, Ram Lila, religious conversation with saints and ascetics in natural surroundings, rag-raginis had been extensively painted. Vinay Singh and Balwant Singh had specially got them painted like rag-ragini, barah-masa and pictorial texts in Hindi and Sanskrit which included the

Mahabharat, Geeta, Ramayan, Shiv Kavacch, Durga-Saptashati, Geet-Govind, Kali Sahasra-Nama and Mahiman Stotra. Because of the contact with Muslim artists and feudal lords from the Mughal court, the Alwar style of painting was more influenced by the Mughal school and its themes in place of Rajput grandeur.

According to the selection of themes the third phase began from the time of Maharaja Shiv Dan Singh (1857). Because of the impact of photography portraits of individuals were made in large numbers. Hundreds of paintings concerning Ganikas and Kam-Shastra are still available. Yogasan was also treated as an important theme of the Alwar style. In this way the tendency towards painting individuals increased against drawing groups.

Salient Features

In early paintings, till the period of Bhaktawar Singh, all the salient features of Rajasthani painting are clearly noted in the Alwar style. Hence it becomes rather difficult to dissociate them from the Jaipur style. But still the effect of natural beauty, the way of living and physical characteristics of the state are clearly discernible in such paintings. These paintings, endowed with lyrical sentiment and folk art, appeal in line and colour.

In its most significant days a balanced coordination of the Rajasthani (particularly Jaipur) style and Mughal and Persian schools is clearly visible. Because of this coordination a separate identity could be given to the Alwar style. Figures of males were drawn like the mango or some curve was provided to the chin. Their stature is slightly short with raised *benis*, their limbs were drawn with great pains, and these represent salient features of the Alwar style.

The local effect is seen in the tie-and-dye work of the turbans. The impact of Rajput and Mughal styles upon the dress of male and female is largely evident. The natural perspective of Alwar may be viewed in paintings of this style with drawings of forests, gardens, *kunj*, palaces and so on.

Construction of beautiful *vaslian* adorned with attractive foliage is a remarkable characteristic of the Alwar style. Trade in these *vaslis* continued to flourish till 1947. Merchants bought *vaslis* designed with foliage from there and covered them with old paintings, and thus greatly enhanced their beauty. Application of bright colours made these paintings very attractive, especially with the use of red, green and gold. Drawings of white clouds, clear sky, forests and gardens full of animals and birds, rivers, mountains were painted according to the natural perspective of Alwar.

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16. Raghuvir Singh, *Purva Adhunik Rajasthan*, p. 195.
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18. For special reference, see Jai Singh Niraj, Vinay Alwar Ank.
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CONCLUSION

Rajasthani painting occupies its own historical place in Indian painting. From the time of its origin it emerged and flourished and has been part of the continuing traditional wave of painting in India since ancient times. Parameters regarding early and later developments of painting from time to time could be detected in it. It is a different matter that it unhesitatingly assimilated the impact of other Indian as well as foreign styles in this period.

Constitution of Rajasthani School

Rajasthani painting developed in various styles of the Mewar, Marwar, Hadoti and Dhundar schools, and their substyles from the 16th century to the 19th is definitely a major branch of Indian painting. Greatly influenced by other schools and styles, the identity of Rajasthani painting could easily be ascertained. It possesses the following main characteristics.

1. *Depiction of Folklife*: Rajasthani painting developed in a tradition of frescoes strictly confined to folklife. In early paintings simplicity and ease and abundance of sentiment relating to folklife in selecting colour schemes and themes have been noted. Art flourished in the cultural milieu of the royal court, and this painting was dissociated from the folk element. Developed at religious and cultural centres, this style of painting was closely associated with public life and popular themes.

2. *Abundance of Pravants*: Rajasthani painting is full of romance. A sentimental approach had been extensively adopted in this style. The sweet Radha-Krishna theme has been used extensively and is deeply rooted in it. A rare combination of *Bhakti* and *shringar* has been depicted in a lively manner in Rajasthani painting.

3. *Variety of Themes:* The subject matter of Rajasthani painting is vast. It flourished on the background of many themes like the various *lilas* of Radha-Krishna, stories relating to the Mahabharat and Bhagwad, nayak-nayika-bheda, rag-ragini, barah-masa, description of seasons, court life, festivals, hunting, drawings of raja-rani, folklore. Illustration of poetry is a unique characteristic of this style.

4. *Colour-Scheme*: Arrangement of colour in Rajasthani painting is specially significant. Red, yellow, white and green are the principal colours of this style. With combinations of these colours artists made paintings in technicolour. Application of sharp bright shining colours possess their own form and style.

5. *Rajput Culture*: Lively depiction of Rajput culture and civilisation and the circumstances of that age is often visible in Rajasthani painting. Their skill as builders of forts and temples, *havelis*, royal courts has been minutely shown in Rajasthani painting. Traditional and devotional ages have also been extensively painted in a lively style.

6. *Nature's Perspective*: The vast perspective of nature has been painted in many colours. There are ponds full of lotus flowers. Rays of serpentine lightning in a sky covered with dense black clouds, forests, gardens, trees, shrubs, flowering plants, leaves, fields full of birds, deer, peacock, lion, elephant, these are special features of Rajasthani painting.

Comparison with Equivalent Schools of North India

For the sake of comparison, two schools of northern painting could be placed on a level with Rajasthani painting. These are the Mughal and Pahari schools. One conclusion to be drawn from a comparative study is that the Rajasthani style, though influenced by these styles, still maintained its originality.

Rajasthani and Mughal Schools

Origin and development of these schools took place simultaneously. Because of political and other influences mutual artistic exchange is quite natural, but both these styles retain their original characters. The Mughal style is based on the Iranian school and the Rajasthani on an indigenous style.

Regarding subject matter, the Mughal style was dominated by the pomp and show of the royal court and of feudal lords, the Rajasthani on the other hand by the simplicity of folklife. The Mughal style had a realistic approach while the Rajasthani style adopted a highly imaginative posture.

The Mughal style emerged from miniatures while the Rajasthani style grew from frescoes. While one was dominated by the grandeur of the royal court, the other was filled with religious sentiment, devotion and *shringar*. In one drawing of the court, wars and royal festivals was extensively depicted, in the other there was lively depicting of a simple rural lifestyle, romantic poetical imagination, religious sentiment and enactments of various moods of Radha-Krishna. One contained a graphic account of Persian poetry and Mughal history, while the other depicted nature in depth on the basis of texts from Hindi-Sanskrit poetry.

In Rajasthani painting colour schemes and style of decoration are entirely different from those of the Mughal style. While the colour scheme of one was austere, the other acquired a lively character. Rajasthani painting assimilated the Puranic tradition of ideal Hindu life, deeds of Rajput chivalry and culture while the other style was predominantly Mughal in character. One used Indian symbols like the lotus, swan and peacock while the other was dominated by trees of *saru*, falcons and camels.

A comparative examination of these styles reveals the diversity of sentiment in them. From the middle of the 16th century, because of the political and social impact of the Mughals, the seeds of Mughal culture spread in Rajasthan. By the beginning of the 17th century the whole of Rajasthan came under the influence of the Mughals. They established their cultural suzerainty over the whole of Rajasthan, and at the same time were tremendously influenced by the Rajputs themselves. Matrimonial alliances between Mughals and Rajputs resulted in mutual exchanges in the arts, and this is clearly visible in these styles.

Rajasthani and Pahari Schools

The style of painting which flourished in Basohli, Jammu, Garhwal, Chamba, Kangra, Guler and Mandi in the hilly areas in the northwest has been termed the Pahari school. Developed in the 18th century, this style is an eternal legacy of the Rajasthani style. With the eclipse of Mughal art some artists from the Mughal court were sheltered by Rajput royalty. Under the impact of environment the paintings they produced acquired the name of new Pahari school.

Pahari painting, like the earlier Rajasthani style, adopted the same parameters for drawings of sentiment and artistic portrayal. On the basis of expressing different moods of Radha-Krishna many paintings were drawn in the Pahari style. Paintings executed on the basis of texts like Bhagwad-Puran, Geet-Govind, Sursagar, Rasikpriya, Bihari-Satsai, *nayika-bheda* and *rag-ragini* are the main heritage of the Kangra and Basohli styles. In the Basohli style, like the Mewar style, indicative colours and folk art predominate. In the Pahari school of painting, expression of sentiment, rhythm in line and colour and diversity of subject matter are unique in the Kangra style.

From the point of view of development of art, the contribution of Raja Sansar Chand (1775-1783) was invaluable. In respect of steadiness of brush, selecting colours, pleasing figures of males and females, drawing of nature in seven colours, diversity in animals and birds and expression of sentiment, the Kangra style is much renowned. Application of seven colours and beauty prevalent in Bundi and Kishangarh styles is particularly noticeable in the Kangra style. This similarity in the Pahari and Rajasthani schools are two strains of the traditions of Indian painting.

The Rajasthani school of painting and other earlier and later styles of Indian painting influenced each other to such an extent that it becomes an uphill task to dissociate them.

The great significance of Rajasthani artists adopting the rich traditions of Indian painting, of which the most artistic is the Ajanta style, cannot be denied. Originating at Medpat (Mewar) and greatly influenced by earlier styles and substyles and adopting later styles, Rajasthani painting greatly enriched Indian art.

Owing to the folk-artistic impact of the Mewar style, total drawing of integrated seven colours in the Bundi and Kishangarh styles, the Mughal influence on the

Jaipur and Alwar styles, whatever draft of Rajasthani painting emerges before us, has been commented on by Dr Coomaraswamy like this: "It is a highly fine form of Indian painting and deserves its unique position among all great styles of the world." Different enactments of moods of Radha-Krishna form the basis of drawings of this style. Based on Hindi, Sanskrit and Rajasthani poetry, this style of painting turned medieval culture and civilisation and sentimental aspects of Hindi poetry dedicated to Lord Krishna into reality.

Rajasthani painting is the lively reflection of the literature of Hindu society. Rajasthani artists applied colours magically. Their unique method of description lends pleasing comfort to the eyes. Their paintings possess an eternal source of romance.

Pictorial texts and miniatures created by them could not only be applied in studying the sentimental and artistic aspects of medieval literature, but could also be utilised in viewing the true form of the whole culture of that age. Hence Rajasthani painting occupies a unique and very significant place in the history of Indian culture in the Mughal and post-Mughal periods.

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